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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 44 OF THE CONVENTION

Periodic reports of States parties due in 1997

Addendum

Egypt*

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[18 September 1998]

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Egypt, see CRC/C/3/Add.6; for consideration of the report by the Committee, see CRC/C/SR.66-68.

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Introduction

1. Egypt has the honour to submit its second periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in accordance with article 44, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It follows on the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6) submitted by Egypt in October 1992 and considered by the Committee in January 1993 at its third session. In pursuance of the secretariat guidelines regarding the length, form and content of periodic reports, adopted by the Committee at its thirteenth session in October 1996, and to avoid repetition, Egypt will confine itself, in respect of certain matters covered by the report, to referring back to the corresponding sections in its initial report. Egypt also wishes to emphasize that this report contains not only updated statistical data but also responses to the concluding observations of the Committee (CRC/C/16, paras. 93-109) on its initial report, topic by topic, in accordance with the Committee's guidelines on the preparation of reports.

2. In submitting its second report, Egypt emphasizes that it intends to continue its constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding and respecting all the rights laid down in the Convention.

I. GENERAL ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

3. Statistics updating or supplementing the data contained in the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 4-17) are given below:

(a) Number of inhabitants, according to the preliminary findings of the 1996 census (including expatriate Egyptians): 61.5 million;

(b) Number of inhabitants (not including expatriates): 59.3 million (30.3 million males and 29 million females);

(c) Number of persons living in cities: 25.5 million;

(d) Number of persons living in rural areas: 33.8 million;

(e) Proportion of inhabitants under age 15 (1996 census): 35 per cent;

(f) Proportion of inhabitants over age 60 (1996 census): 5.1 per cent;

(g) Proportion of inhabitants living in cities (1996 census): 43 per cent;

(h) Average annual income per inhabitant in 1996: US$ 790;

(i) Gross domestic product (in 1996) at factor cost and current prices: US$ 47,349 million;

(j) Average annual rate of inflation in 1996: 7 per cent;

(k) Rate of unemployment in 1996: 8.2 per cent;

(l) The rate of illiteracy was brought down from 52 per cent in 1990 to 43.9 per cent in 1995 and to 38.6 per cent in 1996;

(m) The rate of illiteracy among females was reduced from 66 per cent in 1990 to 53.2 per cent in 1995;

(n) Life expectancy at birth rose from 60 years in 1990 to 63 years in 1995;

(o) Infant mortality (under one year of age) was reduced from 43.3 per thousand live births in 1990 to 37.5 in 1993;

(p) Infant mortality rate among the under-5s was reduced from 6.1 per thousand in 1990 to 5.1 in 1993;

(q) The rate of prenatal and puerperal maternal mortality in 1996 was 174 per 100,000 live births;

(r) Fertility rate (in 1996): 4.9 children per female;

(s) Proportion of families supported by women: 22.5 per cent;

(t) Budget allocation for mothers and children in the 1992-1997 five-year plan: LE 5,607,200,000;

(u) Budget allocation for mothers and children in the 1997-2002 five-year plan: LE 9,604,200,000.

II. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION
(arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6 of the Convention)

A. General political structure and political regime

4. The reader is requested to refer to chapter II of the initial report (paras. 18-32).

B. General framework for the protection of human rights

5. Here, too, the reader is referred to the information given in the initial report (chap. III, sections (a) to (d)). That information may be summarized as follows: All the principles of human rights and freedoms enshrined in the relevant international conventions have been incorporated into the Egyptian Constitution of 1971. Hence, the legislature is committed to implementing those rights under the supervision of the Constitutional Court. Once ratified in accordance with constitutional procedure, conventions acquire the status of laws, and all government authorities are required to apply them in the same way as Egyptian laws. Since it acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Egypt has been making efforts to give effect to its provisions.

6. The legislative working group established by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has reviewed and consolidated all the provisions relating to the rights of the child in a code promulgated within the framework of Act No. 12 of 1996. The code covers the following subjects: access to health care, social welfare, culture, education, provision for foster mothers, access to care for handicapped children, child labour, juvenile justice and the creation of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. The provisions of the code will be examined in the following chapters, which deal with the implementation of individual provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

C. Egypt's contribution to the international human rights instruments

7. On this subject the reader is referred to chapter III, section E, in the initial report. Egypt emphasizes that its role is not confined to promoting accession to the human rights conventions to which it has itself acceded; it also plays an active part in the framing of those conventions, ensuring that they give due expression to the expectations and concerns of the international community. Egypt plays an important role in this sphere at the regional level, both in Africa and in the Arab world. By Presidential Decree No. 356 of 1993 it acceded to the Charter on the Rights of the Arab Child, adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs. Like the international conventions on the rights of the child, the Charter, which came into force on 11 January 1994, covers all the fundamental rights of the Arab child.

8. Egypt helped to formulate the draft Arab convention on human rights which has been adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States and is now open for signature. In the African context, Egypt has joined efforts to draw up a draft additional protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which provides, among other things, for the creation of an African court of human rights. It also took part in the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court to try persons accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity (including genocide) and has supported both the concept and the proposal to establish this new international mechanism for the defence of human rights.

D. Information and publicity about the human rights instruments

9. The Egyptian Constitution stipulates that on completion of the constitutional procedure for accession by Egypt to international agreements, the latter become an integral part of Egyptian law and their provisions are deemed to be legal principles with which all national authorities are required to comply. Human rights conventions to which Egypt accedes take effect upon their publication in the Official Gazette and are deemed to form part of Egyptian law. They are readily available in Arabic at nominal prices. They are also distributed through specialized bodies to all working in the legal field - lawyers and officials in legal institutions and other government services - and their libraries.

10. In practical terms the Government of Egypt, in keeping with the stated requirement to foster awareness among the general public of what the conventions say, is concerned that their implementation and growing recognition of the noble values they represent should proceed in parallel with social development, for only by correlating the two can generations be brought up imbued with these principles, rights and freedoms, aware of their benefits, jealous of the

advantages they confer and quick to defend them. This explains why Egypt has endeavoured to incorporate in school curricula at different levels an introduction to the international human rights instruments and an explanation of their aims and purposes as the outcome of thousands of years of human experience. In addition, those instruments are now among the main subjects taught in all faculties of law, police colleges and national training centres for persons responsible for the administration of justice (judges, prosecutors, police), since the students taking such courses will, given their qualifications and subsequent activities, be the first to be called upon to uphold and enforce their provisions - a body of professionals won over to the cause of human rights and ready to defend them for the benefit of others.

11. The efforts by the Government of Egypt to combat illiteracy are a key element in the promotion and dissemination of international human rights instruments inasmuch as literacy training enables people to learn about and respect these rights and directly to increase the numbers of persons enjoying them. Here, trade unions, occupational associations and non-governmental organizations - corporate entities with nationwide coverage and representing different groups and classes - have an important and pioneering role to play, each by its own methods, in promoting awareness of these rights and freedoms among their members. In this connection it should be mentioned that the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, in cooperation with other interested bodies, has prepared information products inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, other relevant conventions and Egyptian legislation on the subject; those products will be disseminated through audio-visual media and in written form.

E. Mechanisms and structures to coordinate and monitor efforts to implement the Convention

1. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

12. Since its establishment in 1988 the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has been considered to be the mechanism for the supervision and coordination of activities relating to the implementation of the Convention in Egypt, by virtue of the mandate laid down in the decree establishing it. That mandate is as follows:

(a) To propose a general policy on childhood and motherhood;

(b) To draw up a comprehensive draft national plan for childhood and motherhood covering every field, including the provision of care by society and the family, health, education, culture, information and social welfare;

(c) To follow up and evaluate the implementation of the general policy and the National Plan for Childhood and Motherhood in the light of reports submitted by ministries, institutions and agencies, and to remove any obstacles encountered;

(d) To collect information, statistics and studies concerning childhood and maternity and to evaluate their indicators and findings and the possibility of making practical use of them;

(e) Under the terms of its constitution and powers, the Council plays a coordinating role between ministries and public institutions. Its decisions are not subject to appeal and are immediately enforceable.

The Children's Code, promulgated within the framework of Act No. 12 of 1996, is considered to be one of the most noteworthy accomplishments of the Council during the period covered by this report; its promulgation was the outcome of five years of work by the working group on legislation working under the umbrella of the Council.

2. The General Administration for the Legal Protection of Children

13. This body is a new supervisory mechanism established under Decree No. 2235 of 1997 by the Minister of Justice. The decree itself was issued in response to the recommendations of a colloquium organized by the Egyptian Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the French Ministry of Justice and UNICEF. Under the terms of this decree the General Administration is made up of five specialized directorates: the Directorate for Educational Measures; the Directorate for Legal Affairs and Legislation; the Directorate for Training and Research; the Directorate for Cooperation with Local Organizations and Associations; and the Directorate for Information, Statistics and Communications.

14. The General Administration has the following tasks:

(a) To coordinate, with the services responsible for matters relating to children, the implementation of the national strategy for the protection of children in accordance with the Children's Code and the international agreements in force in Egypt, and to draw up plans for the prevention of delinquency among minors;

(b) To coordinate, with the competent legal departments, follow-up on the legal measures for whose enforcement they are responsible in order to make appropriate legal assistance available for children;

(c) To examine the legal position of children at risk and propose appropriate legal and social measures;

(d) To produce statistics on juvenile delinquency;

(e) To design training and qualification programmes for members of legal institutions, sociologists and psychologists concerned with matters relating to minors.

15. Given the powers assigned to it, the General Administration is considered to be an effective supervisory mechanism. It is responsible for national strategy for the protection of children, in accordance with the Children's Code and the international instruments in force in Egypt, and for strengthening its role as a mechanism for monitoring legal action to extend appropriate legal assistance to children and propose legal and social measures for protecting children at risk.

F. Governmental departments competent in the areas covered by the Convention

1. Ministry of Social Affairs

16. This Ministry manages and supervises nurseries in accordance with Act No. 50 of 1977, which defines these as establishments looking after children under six years of age. Nurseries provide social care for children, developing their faculties and potential and preparing them physically, culturally and mentally for primary school; maintain close contact with the children's families; provide the families with information and bring the children up on a sound basis.

17. The Ministry runs the "host families" project, securing the services, against payment, of housewives with children who are prepared to look after children whose mothers are at work. It also manages reception centres and hostels for children who are not being looked after by their families, either because they are orphans or because their families have broken up or are unable to care for them. These establishments are open to children between ages 6 and 18; the age limit may be extended until marriage (for girls) or until the child has completed its studies. There are also "children's villages" which look after children deprived of family care. Another method consists of placing children of unknown parentage with ordinary families to provide them with alternative care.

18. In the field of family protection there are family guidance services administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs; these are counselling services in which experts help families to find stability and solutions to their problems so that their children can have a peaceful and supportive environment.

2. Ministry of Education

19. This Ministry is responsible for providing schooling for all children throughout the country, for promoting adult literacy in cooperation with the General Literacy Office, for designing teaching syllabuses in keeping with scientific progress, and for training teachers and honing teaching skills, making all the international human rights instruments matters of common knowledge and bringing up children according to the values and principles they espouse.

3. Ministry of Health

20. The Ministry of Health provides therapeutic and preventive care for children through a network of health centres and services and hospitals; it organizes national information and compulsory vaccination campaigns, giving mothers medical advice and information and ensuring that families can have medical check-ups.

4. Ministry of Culture

21. It is the Ministry of Culture's mission to satisfy the cultural needs of children in fields, such as literature, the arts and general knowledge, at the same time inculcating in them social values based on the humanitarian heritage and scientific progress. With those ends in view the National Centre for Child Culture, which operates under the Ministry's authority, was established in 1987. Its functions include proposing ways and means of coordinating and

integrating children's cultural activities and studying non-traditional methods of developing children's talents and capabilities. It is also responsible for producing an integrated plan for children's culture in collaboration with the competent departments at the Ministry of Culture and outside bodies. It should be noted that the nation-wide campaigns launched in 1991 under the slogan "Reading for All", presided over by the wife of the President, are still running. The campaign targeted at children encourages them to make use of libraries; it also seeks to increase substantially the numbers of libraries in towns and villages and to make books affordable by all families.

5. Ministry of Information

22. Through the radio and television networks, this Ministry disseminates cultural, entertainment and educational programmes for children, prepared with expert assistance. The programmes are targeted at different age groups and designed to suit the specific features, conditions and needs of Egyptian society.

6. Ministry of Labour and Training

23. This Ministry is responsible for enforcing the Labour Code and other labour legislation. A child labour unit has been established within it as a source of data and information on child labour and to coordinate the efforts of official bodies and regional and international non-governmental organizations endeavouring to restrict child labour. It organizes inspection campaigns in commercial and industrial enterprises to ensure compliance with the legislation on child labour and to levy fines in the event of non-compliance.

7. Higher Council for Youth and Sport

24. The Council is responsible for identifying and encouraging individuals with particular talents in sports disciplines, and for training and channelling the natural abilities and talents of young people between ages 8 and 21 by giving them access to the country's network of sports centres, sports clubs and public sports grounds, and preparing them constantly for local, regional and world championships.

G. Non-governmental organizations

25. The welfare of children and mothers is a major field in which non-governmental organizations play a decisive social role. According to statistics published by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Egypt had 14,262 local bodies in 1995, of which 9,512 were welfare and social development bodies working in one of the above fields. Altogether there were 217 bodies providing treatment for children; 194 dealing with family welfare; 183 providing care for the handicapped and other special categories; and 34 concerned with family planning. In addition, there were 4,650 bodies active in more than one field, 1,406 of which were providing care for children and 1,266 with family welfare among their concerns.

1. Coordination between non-governmental organizations concerned with the rights of the child

26. On the proposal of non-governmental organizations working to improve the condition of children in Egypt and with the assistance of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and UNICEF, a number of meetings were held to consider means of establishing cooperation between those organizations and coordinating their activities for the benefit of children. The first meeting was held in April 1995; it confirmed that getting acquainted, describing their respective approaches and exchanging experiences was the first step towards cooperation between these NGOs. At that meeting two committees were set up; one of them examined the principal foundations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while the other discussed the publication of a declaration voicing the organizations' belief in the importance of particular questions concerning childhood, such as survival, health, education, the development of the child's capabilities, its welfare, and involvement in related activities, and emphasizing the importance of the role played by non-governmental organizations and their experience and the divergence between real life and what, according to the Convention, the status of children ought to be.

2. The principles governing coordination between non-governmental organizations

27. On 20 May 1996 the non-governmental organizations concerned with the rights of the child came to agreement on a declaration laying down the following principles:

(a) Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, taking into account the cultural, economic and social realities of Egypt and bearing in mind that the best interests of the child are paramount;

(b) Equality among children and the rejection of all forms of discrimination between children;

(c) The need to stress effective participation by children based on their awareness of their rights and duties;

(d) The need to adopt teaching methods of a nature to inculcate a democratic spirit among children and to make responsible citizens of them;

(e) Cooperation with national, regional and international bodies, organizations and institutions concerned with questions relating to childhood and with other bodies whose activities affect the status of children in Egypt.

28. These organizations also undertook:

(a) To pursue the dialogue on the rights of the child in greater depth in order to stimulate changes in mental attitudes;

(b) To arrive at a common approach to the role of non-governmental organizations in matters relating to the rights of the child;

(c) To review the programmes they currently offer so as to enable children to exercise all their rights on the basis of the Convention and a common approach to their roles, giving priority to the neediest groups of children;

(d) To cooperate in providing information and changing attitudes towards the theoretical and practical substance of children's rights, and in disseminating that information. They would also collaborate in marshalling and exchanging resources, experiences and research findings and in the design and production of new resources.

The organizations are preparing a report on the rights of the child which will be submitted to the competent authorities, and are endeavouring to design a common method of organization appropriate to the activities of the signatories of the Declaration.

3. Training courses on the rights of the child

29. In cooperation with UNICEF, the group of organizations which signed the declaration of principles ran two courses to train some of their staff as trainers who would then organize three courses to promote awareness of the rights of the child in Northern Egypt, Upper Egypt and the Suez Canal zone. The first course took place in July 1996. The subjects covered included an explanation of the concept of rights and the relationship between the rights of the child and human rights; a review and explanation of the general principles of the Convention; the status of children in Egypt and their needs in the light of the Convention; and the different roles which non-governmental organizations could play in the field of the rights of the child.

30. The second course was run in August 1996 by the Support Service. Its purpose was to train instructors in the field of the rights of the child. The subjects covered were means of determining training needs, defining the objectives of training, selection of the most appropriate method of training, the preparation of supporting material and practical training in the presentation of training programmes. Each of the participants presented a paper at the beginning of the course and another at the end; in this way the training given could be evaluated.

31. A workshop for the governorates of Northern Egypt was held in Alexandria in 1996; it was attended by representatives of 20 local organizations and of the Ministries of Social Affairs, Culture and Education as well as a number of academics. Working groups were set up to examine the different sections of the Convention and the implications of its provisions on survival, development, protection and participation. A second workshop for the governorates of Upper Egypt was held in El-Minya in November 1996. It was attended by 30 organizations and by children. It was decided to distribute the articles of the Convention among a number of workshops and to arrange for the organizations to help plan the workshops and organize the activities.

32. These initiatives had an interesting outcome, namely the conversion of legal provisions into a scientific discipline taught by an integrated scientific method at three broad levels:

(a) Level 1: students at law faculties in Egyptian universities, where the provisions of the Convention have become one of the elements in the study curriculum;

(b) Level 2: a compulsory training course for future public procurators at the National Centre for Legal Studies; it takes place between their appointment and their starting work in the Public Prosecutor's Department;

(c) Level 3: refresher courses organized by the National Centre for Social and Penal Studies for the judges and public procurators with the greatest length of service.

4. Publication on the rights of the child

33. This publication is issued by a group of local organizations concerned with the rights of the child with the support of UNICEF. It is distributed free of charge and is designed to facilitate coordination between the different bodies by serving as a forum for dialogue, exchanges of views and comparisons of approaches; it is hoped it will develop into a common platform for the discussion and dissemination of the Convention. Thanks to the joint efforts of 21 local organizations concerned with the rights of the child, a pilot issue of the publication appeared in April 1996; the first regular issue was published in March 1997.

H. The social compact on childhood and motherhood and its orientations

34. Programmes concerning children have the unreserved support of the Government of Egypt; the steadily rising credits allocated to these programmes during the third five-year plan (1992-93/1996-97) bear witness to this. Under the fourth five-year plan for economic and social development (1997-98/2001-02), programmes relating to childhood and maternity will be allocated more credits than under the third five-year plan. In addition, the State has allocated substantial credits for drinking water supply and sanitation programmes; the amounts allocated can be explained by the fact that a lack of drinking water and sanitation infrastructure has many harmful consequences for the health of the population generally, and mothers and children in particular.

35. To demonstrate that the State does give priority to programmes benefiting children, we will briefly consider the credits initially planned for allocation to programmes relating to childhood and motherhood, and the amounts actually taken up, during the third five-year plan (table 1). Following this, we shall compare the credits originally planned for programmes on childhood and motherhood in the fourth five-year plan with those allocated to similar programmes under the third five-year plan (table 2). Last, we shall briefly examine drinking water supplies and sanitation structures.

1. Changes in credit allocations to programmes relating to childhood and motherhood during the third five-year plan

36. The figures in table 1 show that there was a substantial increase in the credits taken up under the programmes relating to childhood and motherhood. The total volume of credits taken up in 1995/96 was approximately three times the amount of credits allotted for 1992/93 - LE 2.431 billion in 1995/96 as against 831.4 million in 1992/93.

Table 1

Changes in the amounts of credit allocated to programmes relating to childhood and motherhood during the third five-year plan (1992/93-1996/97) (in LE million)

Item	Planned amounts					Amounts taken up			
	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
Pre-university education	562.1	598.7	800.6	880.0	967.1	629.3	1 294.3	1 370.2	1 782.8
Health and population	164.6	165.9	201.9	288.3	628.3	166.4	265.5	291.9	476.1
Ministry of Social Affairs	23.7	22.9	19.4	15.5	12.5	13.9	15.9	12.9	11.5
Ministry of Culture	7.4	3.4	2.9	6.1	6.1	2.2	3.0	4.0	7.3
Higher Council for Youth and Sports	40.9	5.8	43.0	55.2	61.0	18.0	68.9	46.2	158.9
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood	4.3	4.6	4.2	4.2	3.0	1.6	2.2	1.5	3.4
Total credits allocated to programmes relating to childhood and motherhood	803	801.3	1 072	1 249.3	1 678	831.4	1 649.8	1 726.7	2 431

37. The distribution of credits among different sectors is as follows:

(a) Pre-university education

38. The Government of Egypt has devoted particular attention to education and has always considered it a matter of national security. The importance attached to it is evidenced by the substantial increase in the volume of credits devoted to its functioning. The amount of credits taken up in 1995-96 is roughly triple (2.8 times) the amount taken up in 1992-93 (LE 1,782.8 million in 1995-96 as against 629.3 million in 1992-93).

(b) Health and housing

39. The volume of credits allocated for the setting up and improvement of health-care services for children and mothers (basic health care, preventive or therapeutic treatment, family planning) increased. The volume of credits taken up for these fields increased from LE 166.4 million in 1992-93 to 467.1 million in 1995-96.

(c) Social services

40. The figures show that the volume of credits allocated to the sectors providing social services for mothers and children increased in every year except 1994-95, when they fell because of the transfer of certain programmes concerning women from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry for Population and Family Planning, and subsequently to the Ministry of Health and Population. Total credits increased from LE 13.9 million in 1992-93 to 15.9 million in 1993-94, but had fallen back to 11.5 million by 1995-96.

(d) Culture

41. Although the credits devoted to children's cultural development are small in comparison with those allocated to other sectors contributing to child welfare, the amount has increased year by year. The credits taken up in the area of cultural programmes for children, which only totalled LE 2.2 million in 1992-93, had risen to LE 7.3 million in 1995-96. It should, however, be pointed out, firstly, that expenditure on cultural development is not covered solely by credits, but is to a considerable extent met from current expenditure, and secondly, that cultural development is not solely the concern of the Ministry of Culture: a number of other departments, and in particular the media, the Ministry of Culture and the Higher Council for Youth and Sports also play their part.

(e) Youth services

42. Although the services offered in the fields of youth and sports are primarily the responsibility of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports in Egypt, some are provided by other institutions such as the Ministry of Education. As regards cooperation in the provision of these services, particular mention should be made of the decision taken by the Higher Council for Youth and Sports to open the stadiums at youth centres to schoolchildren so that they can take up sports. Total credits taken up under youth and sports programmes have increased considerably; the amount for 1995 was nine times that for 1992-93 (LE 158.9 million in 1995 as against only LE 18 million in 1992-93).

(f) The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

43. Every year, with the assistance of experts and university academics, this Council prepares a progress report and studies on the status of children, accomplishments in fostering children's cultural, educational, social and sporting abilities, and advances in health and legal protection. The most important project recently completed by the Council was the establishment of a reference framework for the childhood and motherhood segment of the fourth five-year plan, which throws light on the true situation of children. On the basis of that situation the Council is proposing objectives for incorporation into the plan and policies for attaining them. Thanks to cooperation from the ministries concerned, these objectives now appear in the list of projects benefiting children and mothers in the fourth five-year plan, which shows the credits allotted to childhood and motherhood sector by sector.

2. Credits in the fourth five-year plan (1997/98-2001/02)

44. In view of the importance of protecting children and mothers and enabling them to achieve their potential, the fourth five-year economic development plan allots more credits for projects relating to childhood and motherhood than did the third five-year plan (1992/93-1996/97). In addition, the distribution of the credits under the fourth plan shows that other ministries - in particular the ministries responsible for housing and equipment, awqaf (religious endowments) and local authorities - are beginning to devote part of their own resources to projects relating to childhood and motherhood (see table 2).

Table 2

Projects concerning childhood and motherhood in the third and fourth five-year plans
(in LE million)

Item	Third five-year plan (1992/93-1996/97)	Fourth five-year plan (1997/98-2001/02)
Pre-university education	3 808.5	7 410.2
Health and population	1 449	1 558
Ministry of Social Affairs	94	96.5
Ministry of Culture	25.9	13.1
Higher Council for Youth and Sports	205.9	352.5
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood	20.3	28.6
Ministry for Local Authorities	-	71
Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure	-	64.1
Ministry of Agriculture	-	9
Ministry for awqaf	-	1.2
Total credits allocated to programmes relating to childhood and motherhood	5 607.6	9 604.2

It should be noted that the credits allocated under the fourth five-year plan are expected to rise because of the increase (mentioned earlier) in the rate of implementation of the third five-year plan.

3. Drinking water supplies and sanitation

45. Drinking water supplies and the installation of appropriate sanitation facilities are an important factor in the protection of public health; thus the State has allocated a considerable proportion of its resources to these sectors. The credits allocated to such projects have risen steadily from LE 1,927.9 million in 1992/93; in 1995/96 they stood at LE 3,612.5 million - an increase of 87.4 per cent. The increases in the credits allocated to drinking water supplies and sanitation has led to an increase in coverage in those sectors. The proportion of households with access to drinking water increased from 69 per cent in 1990 to approximately 78.6 per cent in 1995; with regard to sanitation, the proportion increased from 12 per cent in 1990 to 31.9 per cent in 1995.

III. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD IN EGYPTIAN LAW

46. According to article 2 of the 1996 Children's Code, a child is a person under the age of 18 years. Consequently anyone who has not reached that age is subject to the provisions of the Code. Civil, legal and commercial rights have been brought into line with one another by the legislature and accession thereto set at 21 years. Under article 57 of Act No. 119 of 1952, any person over 18 years of age may be authorized to undertake commercial activities. The minimum age for marriage is set at 18 for males and 16 for females.

47. A child under 18 years of age is subject to the provisions of Act No. 118 concerning parental authority over the person and Act No. 119 concerning parental authority over property; both instruments date from 1952. The two texts govern the exercise of parental authority by the father or by those replacing him, in order of importance (designation of the person exercising parental authority, withdrawal or suspension of parental authority). This subject is discussed in greater detail in chapter VI, section B, below in connection with the observations concerning the implementation of article 18 of the Convention (paras. 71-75).

48. Under the Children's Code the minimum age for admission to employment is 14 years. Subject to a decision by the governor of the province concerned and with the agreement of the Minister of Education, it is legal to give children in the 12 to 14 age group training in seasonal employment provided that their physical growth, health and regular attendance at school do not suffer thereby. The minimum age for membership of a workers' trade union is 15 years.

49. The right of direct exercise of political rights, namely, the right to express an opinion during consultations or the election of members of the People's Assembly, is recognized for every person of 18 years or older. Every person aged 18 or over is eligible for compulsory military service.

50. A child under seven years of age is not regarded as criminally responsible (article 94 of the Children's Code). No criminal penalty may be inflicted on a child in the 7 to 15 age group. Such children are subject to preventive or rehabilitation measures (article 101 of the Code). Reduced penalties are inflicted on children between ages 15 and 18, who are not liable to capital punishment or to imprisonment with forced labour. In the case of a minor offence, a period of probation or placement in a social institution may be substituted for a prison sentence. Children aged 14 or over may bear witness in criminal trials. Younger children may be heard without taking an oath (article 283 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).

IV. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

51. On this subject Egypt refers back to chapter IV, section C, of its initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 99-114). The 1996 Children's Code incorporates the principles and provisions of the Convention and brings national legislation into line with that instrument.

A. Non-discrimination (art. 2)

52. The provisions of the Children's Code apply to all Egyptian children under 18. In accordance with the principle of equality laid down in article 40 of the Constitution, all discrimination and all preferential treatment between Egyptian children are prohibited.

B. Best interests of the child (art. 3)

53. Article 3 of the Children's Code contains a general provision applicable to all decisions and procedures affecting or relating to children. It reads: "all decisions and procedures relating to children, by whomever initiated and enforced, must give priority to the protection of the child and to the child's best interests". All State authorities comply with this legal standard.

C. The right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

54. These rights are guaranteed and protected by the entire body of provisions of the Children's Code, as follows:

(a) The State shall take steps to protect childhood and motherhood, to ensure the well-being of the child and to guarantee it conditions in which it can develop healthily in all respects, in freedom, dignity and humanity (art. 1);

(b) Every child shall enjoy all its rights, including the rights to nursing, care, food, clothing, housing, contact with parents and protection of its property, in accordance with the legislation on personal status (art. 7);

(c) Steps must be taken to ensure that babies are delivered by physicians or authorized midwives and that all persons breaching this regulation are punished (arts. 8-13);

(d) Steps must be taken to vaccinate each child and protect it against contagious diseases, without payment, and any person committing a breach of this rule must be punished. Each child shall be given a health booklet, which will remain with him or her until the end of secondary studies (arts. 25 and 29).

D. Prohibition of colouring matter and preservatives in food and food preparations for children and penalties for breaches of that rule (art. 30)

55. The reader is referred to chapter VII of this report. The relevant provisions cover the guarantee of the right to life, survival and development in suitably hygienic conditions and related safeguards enabling children to enjoy these rights in full security.

E. Respect for the opinions of the child (art. 12)

56. Article 1 of the Children's Code provides that the State shall guarantee all children conditions in which they can develop healthily in all respects and in freedom. The legislation on personal status takes into account the views of the child on the subject of custody after the expiry of the period during which it is entrusted to the care of its mother.

57. The State endeavours to promote awareness of the Convention, to disseminate its provisions, to spread knowledge of modern educational methods and to encourage parents to give their children the means of expressing their views. Using socializing activities, schools apply teaching methods designed to draw the child into participation in school activities and teach it the techniques of dialogue and respect for others' views.

58. Within teaching establishments, pupils' associations have been created by law to inculcate democratic values in children and to foster those values by means of elections or standing for election in those associations. It will be recalled that on the occasion of the festivities for children in November 1996 the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood held a national conference on childhood in the town of Tanta (Western governorate), which was attended by delegations of children from every governorate in Egypt. Children presided over the festivities as a whole and the different meetings which took place within it; they discussed the general trend of education, radio and television broadcasts and matters of interest to them and expressed their views on how those programmes might be developed or possibly changed. Some television broadcasts (for example, the "Children's Parliament") encourage children to express their views on a variety of topics.

V. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS
(arts. 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 37)

59. On this subject the reader is referred to chapter IV, section D, of the initial report (paras. 115-144). Additional information on the implementation of articles 17 and 37 is given below.

A. Access to appropriate information (art. 17)

60. The Government of Egypt is fully determined to give effect to the provisions of the Convention and satisfy all children's cultural needs. Every village, every district and every public centre has been provided with a children's library. Cultural clubs for children with libraries, film libraries and theatres have also been set up. The General Book Authority publishes a number of books for children. During the annual international children's book fair every State presents publications in various languages. During the annual children's film festival Egyptian children can discover productions from other States. The "Reading for All" festival, which begins each year as the school holidays start, under the patronage of the President's wife, is considered to be a major State event. It has received an award from UNESCO and is quoted as an example in many countries. The media play a primary role by broadcasting programmes for children, either Egyptian-produced or imported under an exchange programme. Non-governmental organizations play an important role through their international, regional and local activities. Their numerous programmes offer a wide range of cultural, scientific, educational and health promotion services and encourage children to take up recreation and cultivate art in all its forms.

B. The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art. 37)

61. It should be recalled that the values and religious traditions enshrined in Egyptian society ensure that a child enjoys the attention and respect of the different communities, classes and social groups, and is treated as befits the foundation for the future of the family. Children thus flourish in a climate of affection and acquire a sense of belonging to a family.

62. All inhuman or degrading practices and treatments are prohibited by law, which, as stated in the initial report (paras. 142 and 143), treats them as punishable criminal offences. The State punishes them with penal sanctions and spares no effort, through various institutions, to make families aware of modern methods of bringing up children and ways of dealing with the problems which arise. To that end it has made counselling mechanisms available to families and gives special training to officials working in fields related to childhood.

63. As regards the efforts made by Egypt to abolish female circumcision, by decision of the Minister of Health the operation is prohibited in State-run or other hospitals except for overriding medical reasons. An appeal against that decision has been rejected by the High Administrative Court.

64. In this connection mention should be made of the establishment of a new supervisory mechanism, the General Administration for the Legal Protection of Children. The tasks of that institution were described above in chapter II, section E (paras. 13-15).

VII. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE (art. 5, art. 18, paras. 1 and 2, arts. 9-11 and 19-21, art. 25, art. 27, para. 4 and art. 39)

65. Reference is made in this connection to chapter IV of the initial report. The information which follows complements that given in subsections 1 (paras. 146-152), 2 (paras. 153-157) and 6 (paras. 169-73).

A. Parental guidance (art. 5)

66. In order to consolidate the family unit, help families confront the problems and difficulties they face and strengthen the role of the family in the bringing up of children, family guidance and counselling offices have been established; their task is to strengthen the bonds holding the different elements of the family together in order to safeguard the stability and harmony of the unit and protect it from collapse. These offices operate under the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs. They endeavour, on the one hand, to resolve family problems and, on the other hand, to promote public awareness of the importance of the family and the need to make the family a stable, nurturing environment. They employ experts in social psychology and the law with a thorough knowledge of matters such as claiming allowances, reconciliation with

runaway spouses and the custody of children. Cases are either brought to them directly or referred to them by family courts. According to the statistics for 1994, there were 90 offices of this kind in provincial capitals, the larger towns and densely populated urban centres. The Ministry of Social Affairs states that on 31 December 1996 there were 99 offices serving 9,526 persons and, on the average, 96 families per office.

67. Table 3 below shows that the majority of cases referred to the welfare offices are automatic referrals; the next largest category of cases is those transmitted by courts of law.

Table 3

Number of cases referred to offices by origin of referral, as at 31 December 1996

Automatic referral	By a court of law	By the police	By the services of the Ministry of Social Affairs	Other	Total
5 108	2 411	32	144	231	7 926

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs statistics.

68. The nature of the services provided by these offices is shown in table 4 below. It can be seen that conjugal disputes are at the origin of 27 per cent of cases; the next two largest categories are economic problems (21.5 per cent) and problems with claiming allowances (18 per cent).

Table 4

Services to families at 31 December 1996

Type of service	Custody of children	Claiming of allowances	Reconciliation with runaway spouse	Economic assistance	Settlement of disputes		Psychological counselling	Help in solution of multiple inter-linked problems	Other	Total
					Conjugal	Family				
Number	261	1 464	320	1 752	2 195	650	117	568	815	8 142
%	3.2	18	3.9	21.5	27	8	1.4	7	10	100

69. It will be observed that the rate of refusal to resort to the services of the welfare offices is very low (2.2 per cent).

Table 5

Responses to efforts of welfare offices

Type of reply	Complete reply	Partial reply	No reply	Refusal to resort to services of offices	Total
Number	5 927	1 087	946	182	8 142
%	72.8	13.4	11.6	2.2	100

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs statistics, 1996.

70. In view of the population problem - a problem which must be dealt with as a matter of the highest priority if children are to enjoy total protection, quite apart from the threat to development plans posed by population growth - and within the framework of national population policy, which is the responsibility of the Family Planning Department in the Ministry of Health and Housing, various family planning services are provided by local family planning centres, which are found throughout all the governorates of the Republic. All these centres come under the General Society for Family Planning. There are 468 in all, 308 of them in urban areas, 148 in rural areas and 12 in desert zones. The total number of consultations given by these centres is about 250,000, and the caseload increases by 100,000 every year. The centres distribute family planning devices, such as the diaphragm and the Pill; they also teach traditional techniques and provide fertility treatment. They are also working within a project aimed at improving family planning services and conducted in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which is seeking, among other things, to reduce fertility in Egypt by developing the use of family planning methods. It is hoped to raise the number of women receiving treatment to 18 million by the establishment of 18 new centres in 18 governorates. These centres include clinics, dispensaries and mobile services.

B. Parental responsibility
(art. 18, paras. 1 and 2)

71. This section supplements section E, subsection 2, chapter IV, of the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 153-157).

72. Article 18 of the Egyptian Personal Status Code stipulates that child maintenance is the responsibility of the father until the child has completed its studies. That responsibility continues, in the case of girls, until they are married or start to earn a living and, in the case of boys, until they start to earn a living. A boy suffering from a physical or mental disability which prevents him from earning a living remains the responsibility of his father. Fathers must support their children and provide them with such lodging as they are entitled to expect, consistent with the fathers' means.

73. A child who has not reached majority (age 21) is subject to the authority of the parents (wilaya) or guardians (wisaya). Act No. 18 of 1952, which states the conditions under which parental authority over an individual may be ended, defines the person exercising parental authority (wali) as being the father, the grandfather, the mother, the guardian (wasi) or any person in whose care the child is placed by decision or judgement of the competent court.

74. Act No. 18 requires the person exercising parental authority to treat the child as his parental or family responsibilities and position as upbringer dictate. Parental authority is withdrawn or suspended when the person exercising it acts negligently or in a manner prejudicial to the child as follows:

(a) Article 2 stipulates that parental authority shall be withdrawn when the person exercising it is convicted of rape, indecency, debauchery or any similar act or offence against the child in his care;

(b) Article 3 stipulates that parental authority shall be withdrawn or suspended when the person exercising it is sentenced to imprisonment with forced labour for life or for a fixed period; is convicted of rape, indecency or debauchery; is found guilty of having exposed the child to danger; confines the child excessively; has been an inmate in a psychiatric asylum; endangers the child's health, safety, morals or upbringing by ill-treatment, reprehensible or depraved conduct; becomes a drug addict; or fails in duty towards the child.

The same Act lays down the conditions under which a child can be taken into care or placed in its home environment under the responsibility of a member of its family, a trustworthy person or a specialized institution.

75. Act No. 119 of 1952 concerning parental authority over property governs the protection of the property of a child lacking legal competence or below the age of majority. Parental authority is entrusted to the father, the grandfather or the guardian, who undertake to administer the property of the minor in accordance with the law. The Act defines the rights of persons exercising parental authority and of guardians, the limitations on their powers, the legal supervision to which their trusteeship is subject, and how their trusteeship expires. In addition, it stipulates that any failure by the trustee to discharge the duties which custody of the child's property imposes on him is a criminal offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

76. These two laws show that the Egyptian legislature has clearly defined and determined parents' responsibilities towards children over which they exercise parental authority, namely the obligation to bring them up decently without harming or endangering them in any way, and to safeguard their property until they reach majority.

77. There are two types of institution offering care for children: nurseries and children's clubs.

1. Nurseries

78. Working mothers are helped to reconcile work and family responsibilities by the availability of the many nurseries that are to be found, particularly in the cities. In accordance

with article 31 of the Children's Code, any premises designed to cater for children under age 4 are deemed to be a nursery. These institutions are placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

79. The tasks of nurseries, as defined in article 32 of the Code, are as follows:

(a) To educate the child to be a member of society and provide it with means of developing its abilities and talents;

(b) To prepare the child physically, culturally and morally for a decent life in conformity with the objectives and religious values of society;

(c) To promote awareness in families of the desirability of an upbringing conducted partly in the family environment and partly in a nursery;

(d) To strengthen the social links between the nursery and the family.

Nurseries must have the resources to be able to perform their tasks as the implementing decree requires. There are nurseries in all governorates, distributed according to need. No authorized nursery may be closed except by substantiated decision of the competent committee in the governorate concerned (article 44 of the Code).

Table 6

Situation of nurseries on 30 June 1996

Number of nurseries	Number of classes	Total capacity	Number of children enrolled	Utilization rate
5 777	15 507	491 565	423 039	86.1%

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs statistics.

Table 7

Distribution of nurseries within Egypt by zone on 31 December 1996

Zones	Number of nurseries	Number of classes	Capacity	Number of children enrolled
Urban	3 540	111 000	344 808	312 281
Rural	1 960	3 862	13 254	100 693
Desert	277	545	13 803	100 065
Total	5 777	15 507	491 565	423 039

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs statistics.

80. At the end of the third five-year plan (1992-1997) the country had 6,000 nurseries with a capacity of 300,000 children. It is planned to create 750 new ones during the fourth plan period (1997-2002), thus providing coverage for 1.2 per cent of children in the age group under consideration (more than 15 per cent of the total population). At the end of the third plan period there were 3,000 nurseries designed specifically to provide nursing facilities for small babies. The fourth plan provides for the creation of 400 new ones, distributed throughout the governorates.

2. Children's clubs

81. Article 47 of the Children's Code defines children's clubs as social and educational establishments for children between ages 6 and 14. They provide welfare services through leisure-time activities, using sound educational methods. The tasks of these clubs are as follows:

(a) To provide care of an educational and social character for children during public and school holidays;

(b) To supplement the family and the school in ensuring the development of the child and to help working mothers by looking after children, promoting their physical and spiritual development and preventing them from sliding into delinquency;

(c) To prepare children to acquire new skills and talents so as to develop their potential;

(d) To strengthen the links between children's families and the clubs by developing awareness of educational techniques within families and by giving them access to the appropriate knowledge.

82. At the end of the third plan period (1992-97) there were 400 clubs of this type. The fourth plan provides for the establishment of 125 new ones at governorate level. So far the State has established 210 clubs and community organizations have set up 93, with a total capacity of 32,931 children. A number of these clubs have children's libraries (under the fourth plan 250 new ones are to be established throughout the country).

83. To remedy the lack of green spaces caused by urban sprawl, credits for the creation of children's parks have been included in annual plans. At the end of the third five-year plan period, 26 had been established; it is planned to create a further 50 by the year 2002.

84. The Social Security Act provides for allowances to be paid to some categories of children. The Act defines a family as a group composed of a couple and children, or of certain elements of such a group who, although not living under the same roof, share a single income. Chapter II, article 6, of the Children's Code provides for the payment of monthly allowances to fatherless children, fatherless children whose mothers have remarried, orphans of unknown parentage, children of a divorced woman in the event of her death, marriage or imprisonment, and children of prisoners serving terms of more than 10 years.

C. Separation from parents

85. The reader is referred to section E, subsection 3, chapter IV, of the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 158-165). The information given there remains valid.

D. Family reunification

86. The information given in paragraphs 166 and 167 of the initial report remains valid.

E. Recovery of maintenance

87. The reader is referred to paragraph 168 of the initial report, which remains valid.

F. Children deprived of a family environment (art. 20)

88. This section supplements section E, subsection 6, chapter IV, of the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 169-173).

89. Article 48 of the Children's Code defines a welfare institution for children deprived of a family environment as any centre receiving children between ages 6 and 18 who have lost one or both parents, are the children of broken homes, or whose families are unable to care for them decently. Care may continue until marriage, in the case of girls, and until the end of studies, in the case of boys. Children admitted to such institutions receive occupational, social, educational, recreational and health care. When they leave, additional care is provided to ensure that they are stable and well-integrated into the outside world. Each establishment consists of a school, a workshop and a yard. Children in higher education may apply to receive the benefits provided by these institutions until they have completed their studies.

90. Article 49 establishes the right to receive a monthly allowance from the Ministry of Social Affairs in accordance with Act No. 30 of 1977 on social security. The allowance may not be less than LE 20 per child per month. It is payable to children who have lost one or both parents, or whose fathers are unknown, children whose divorced mothers have died, been imprisoned or remarried; and children whose fathers are serving prison sentences of more than 10 years.

91. According to Ministry of Social Affairs statistics dated 31 December 1996, these institutions can hold 9,387 children but in fact are only caring for 6,181 - 3,442 boys (55.7 per cent of the total) and 2,739 girls (44.3 per cent). Fatherless children make up by far the largest category (24.6 per cent); the next largest categories are children of unknown parents (20.6 per cent), motherless children (14 per cent), children of divorced or separated parents (9.8 per cent), orphans (8.1 per cent), children from homes where the provider is sick (5.1 per cent) and other cases (5 per cent). Table 8 shows that the largest group of children being cared for in these establishments are those in the age group 6-9 years (32.3 per cent of the total); the next largest category is the age group 12-15 years (27.7 per cent). Last come the children aged between 9 and 12, who make up 2.9 per cent of the total.

Table 8

Distribution by age of children admitted to institutional care

Age	Under age 6	6-9	9-12	12-15	15-18	Over 18	Total
Number	376	1 993	182	1 715	1 226	689	6 181
Percentage	6.1	32.3	2.9	27.7	19.8	11.2	100

Alternative care

92. Article 46 of the Children's Code establishes the foster family system. That system ensures that a child is looked after from the social, psychological, health and occupational standpoints. The beneficiaries must be aged two or over and come from families unable to bring them up. The foster families give them a sound upbringing. The rules and arrangements governing the scheme are laid down in the implementing decree. Children deprived of care in their own families are taken in by families selected in accordance with criteria established by the Ministry of Social Affairs. There they are guaranteed an environment conducive to their development until they reach majority or, in the case of girls, until marriage.

93. On 31 December 1996, there were 4,225 children placed with foster families. According to Ministry of Social Affairs statistics, most of these children were foundlings (95.4 per cent); the next largest category consisted of illegitimate children (2.1 per cent), followed by children from broken homes (1.8 per cent) and, finally, stray children (0.7 per cent).

Table 9

Age distribution of children placed with foster families on 31 December 1996

Age	Under 3	3-6	6-12	12-15	15-18	18-21	Over 21	Total
Number	1 044	1 096	922	460	343	196	164	4 225
Percentage	24.7	26	21.8	10.9	8.1	4.6	3.9	100

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs statistics.

Table 9 shows that the largest group of children in foster care are between ages 3 and 6 (26 per cent of all cases); the next largest category is the under-3s. The smallest category is that of children over 21, since they have reached majority; if they are students, they are allowed under the Act to remain in care until the end of their studies.

94. According to the statistics, most cases of foster care are unpaid (62.8 per cent); in 14 per cent of cases payments are made, and the remainder (23.2 per cent) are arranged through children's homes. Through these different mechanisms (institutions for children

deprived of family care and foster families) the Ministry of Social Affairs seeks to ensure that social, psychological, health and occupational care is given to children over the age of 2 whose natural families are unable to bring them up decently, namely:

(a) Foundlings;

(b) Stray children whose parentage or residence the authorities are unable to determine;

(c) Children whose natural families are shown by inquiries to be unable to bring them up (children of prisoners or women committed to psychiatric hospitals, children who cannot be brought up by any of their relatives);

(d) Children reduced to vagrancy following the separation of their parents (art. 49 of the Children's Code).

95. In view of the proportions which the problem is assuming, the Ministry of Social Affairs proposes, under the five-year plan for 1997-2002, to set up 50 sites where these children can be provided with care, either in foster families or in care centres. The ultimate aim is to make these services available throughout the different governorates.

G. Adoption; illicit transfer and non-return; abuse and neglect; physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration; periodic review of placement

96. The information given in section E, subsections 7, 8, 9 and 10, chapter IV, of the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 174-188) remains unchanged. The reader is requested to refer to it.

VII. BASIC HEALTH AND WELFARE
(arts. 6; 18, para. 3; 23; 24; 26 and 27, paras. 1-3)

A. Disabled children

97. Articles 75 to 86 of the Children's Code stipulate that disabled children are entitled to special social, health and psychological protection. They should receive special education. They and their families should be provided with social services and the children should have free prostheses to enable them to overcome the restrictions imposed by their disabilities. Article 85 of the Code makes provision for a fund to benefit disabled children and provide them with a special education. The fund is a legal entity. The draft Presidential decree establishing it has been drawn up and is now in course of promulgation.

98. The Code requires the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education to set up special educational establishments for disabled persons with classes adapted to their capacities and aptitudes. It specifies that prostheses and means of transport for disabled children and their education should be exempted from all taxes and duties, and that the children should be given certificates attesting to the education they have received.

99. To ensure the minimum age for entering the workforce is respected, the Code requires establishments that offer training for disabled children to pass on to the local employment agency any information of relevance to a disabled child's training, so that the child can be steered towards a job in keeping with its age and abilities, and one that does not take it away from home. The employment agency, in turn, must provide the Department of Social Affairs with monthly reports on disabled children who have found jobs.

100. Any business employing more than 50 workers must recruit disabled children from among those proposed by employment agencies. Such children must account for at least 2 per cent of the workforce, out of the total of 5 per cent disabled prescribed by the 1975 Disabled Persons (Training) Act (No. 39). An employer who refuses to take on a qualified disabled person is required by law to pay the latter a sum equal to the pay attached to the job applied for, starting on the date when the offence is established and continuing for not more than one year. The penalty is waived if the employer offers the disabled person suitable work.

101. The Code requires employers to keep a special register of the disabled people working for them and the details of their certificates of competency. Employers must produce this register for inspection by the local employment agency, and notify it of the total number of employees and all the disabled persons on their payrolls, together with their earnings, within the time limits specified by the implementing regulations. Breaches of these regulations are punishable by fines of between LE 100 and LE 1,000.

102. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, representatives of the private sector and local leaders, has set up a group of experts on the rights of disabled children with a mandate to study the causes and incidence of disabilities and deficiencies among children from three governorates representative of Lower Egypt, Upper Egypt and the Nile delta respectively. The experts will examine the services offered to children in this category, study their needs and devise a programme to enable Egypt to accomplish the objectives it has set itself. In cooperation with the information service, backed up by a decision by the Council of Ministers, the National Council has also put forward a national strategy to address disability-related problems in Egypt during the period 1997-2002. This includes a study of the current status of disabled people in Egypt - their numbers and the rates and kinds of disability among children. The aim is to draw up the main lines of the strategy with a view to setting targets and proposing implementation during the coming five-year plan (1997-1998 to 2001-2002).

103. Studies overseen by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood have encouraged the use of the expression "children with special needs" instead of disabled children, and projects designed to take advantage of international experience in the fields of education, training and protection have come into being as a result of cooperation between the Ministry of Health, the French Government and international organizations. One palace of culture (cultural centre) has been equipped to provide services to children with special needs and enable them to devote themselves to their hobbies while simultaneously offering them cultural services using appropriate methods.

104. Teaching hospitals treat persons with infirmities, or disabilities, provide rehabilitation and offer appropriate teaching services. They also encourage prenuptial screening for hereditary or contagious diseases which might give rise to disabilities in children.

105. The Ministry of Health organizes national vaccination campaigns against disabling contagious illnesses; over 85 per cent of children in the target categories are now covered. Other campaigns seek to eradicate childhood polio before the year 2000. The monitoring system has been modernized to provide daily bulletins of acute polio cases in infants. Local health administrations in each governorate prepare a weekly list of cases for the central administration at the Ministry of Health. At the same time they carry out monitoring and compile monthly reports. Efforts are also being made to modernize refrigeration methods at the country's vaccination units.

106. The Ministry of Health and the private sector are setting up a national mobile rescue scheme involving the establishment of an integrated network of first-aid posts along major highways and in remote areas to treat victims of accident and injury.

B. Health and health services (art. 24)

107. Egypt is endeavouring to make progress on two fronts in the health sector: legal regulation, and practical action to attain the objectives of that legal regulation and provide the services that are essential for children's survival and development. Part 2 of the Code deals with children's health care. Part 5, which deals with working children and mothers, contains provisions to protect working mothers during the breast-feeding period so as to safeguard children's normal and healthy development.

1. Regulation of obstetrics

108. Under article 8 of the Children's Code, only medical practitioners and specialist workers such as midwives licensed by the Ministry of Health following appropriate training may assist births. Articles 9 to 13 contain comprehensive regulations governing recognized competent midwives, licensing requirements, disbarment and the fines to which they are liable, as well as the penalties for practising without a licence, namely a maximum of six months in prison and a fine of not less than LE 200 or more than LE 500.

109. The Ministry of Health has instituted a programme to train dayas (traditional birth attendants) and enhance their awareness and knowledge of obstetric techniques during labour and care for newborns. This programme is being implemented in the form of regular training courses in each governorate, particularly in areas where dayas are most in demand. The courses are organized in general hospitals and are run by specialists. The dayas learn the basic rules concerning birth certificates, how to record certain essential information, and the criteria for deciding whether a woman in labour should be hospitalized. Attendance at these periodic courses is a mandatory requirement for obtaining or renewing a licence to practise. A daya without a licence is liable to serious criminal penalties.

2. Improvement of health services

110. Efforts to improve health services are focused on the following areas:

(a) Better services at health centres through the use of new equipment, training of practitioners in antenatal care and screening for complications, measures to facilitate primary health care for newborns, and raising public awareness of these services;

(b) Training in these services for medical practitioners of both sexes.

111. A programme was launched at the end of 1993 to modernize and set up 100 neonatal health care units throughout the country. A group of experts has been appointed to oversee the work of these units and enhance the skills of their personnel. The second phase of the programme aims to increase the number of such units, establish neonatal in-patient services and install the equipment for basic medical tests.

3. Health record

112. Articles 27-29 of the Children's Code stipulate that every child must have a health record. The details in the record must be duplicated in a special register kept by the health centre, and the serial number of the record must be indicated on the birth certificate. This record must be issued to the person responsible for the child and produced at every medical examination to enable the physician to document the child's state of health and note vaccination dates; it must be forwarded to the child's school and kept with its school records. The child's state of health must be recorded throughout its school career until the end of secondary education. The father of a child who does not have a health record must request that one be issued. The implementing decree specifies the arrangements for periodic medical examinations, which must take place at least once a year. A specimen record has been circulated by order of the Ministry of Health; the system was launched in 1996 and is now in general use.

4. Vaccination and immunization of children

113. Articles 25 and 26 of the Children's Code stipulate that children must be vaccinated against contagious diseases. This responsibility devolves upon the person responsible for the child. Children may be vaccinated by qualified private physicians; the person responsible for a child must produce a certificate to this effect at a health centre. If these provisions are not observed, the offender is liable to a fine of between LE 20 and LE 200.

Table 10

Principal vaccines and vaccination age prescribed by article 25

Vaccine	Age
TB	Before one month
Polio (first dose)	
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTP) (first dose)	Two months
Hepatitis B (first dose)	
Polio (second dose)	Four months
DTP (second dose)	
Hepatitis B (second dose)	Six months
Polio (third dose)	
DTP (third dose)	Six months
Hepatitis B (third dose)	
Measles	Nine months
Polio booster	18 months
DTP booster	

Article 25 of the Code makes provision for fines if this schedule is missed by longer than 30 days after the prescribed immunization date, despite the issuance of a reminder.

5. Efforts to reduce infant mortality

114. The infant mortality rate for children under two years of age was 28.7 per cent in 1994. In 1992, the mortality rate for children under six years of age was 59 per cent and the neonatal mortality rate was 10 per cent, or 40 per cent of all infant deaths. These rates, though a significant reduction on previous years, are still high and every effort is being made to reduce them further. The measures referred to above to improve obstetric practices, provide health services and strengthen immunization programmes have all contributed to this reduction. In addition, the competent authorities are making efforts in the following areas:

(a) Reduction in the incidence of contagious diseases and those with a high rate of mortality;

(b) Continuation of the compulsory immunization programme for children under one year of age with a view to eradicating childhood polio and neonatal tetanus. Only 150 polio cases among children were reported in 1993;

(c) Reduction in the incidence of neonatal tetanus: there were 1,277 cases in 1993 compared with 6,554 in 1988;

(d) Immunization since 1992 against viral hepatitis, which claims over 20,000 lives a year.

115. Indictors for the period 1993-1995 show the following:

(a) A decline in polio cases among children owing to increased vaccination coverage (89 per cent in 1995);

(b) A decline in neonatal tetanus cases, reduced to 10.5 per cent of live births;

(c) A decline in diphtheria cases owing to increased vaccination coverage (89 per cent in 1995);

(d) A decline in cases of tubercular meningitis owing to increased vaccination coverage (94 per cent);

(e) A decline in measles cases owing to increased vaccination coverage (90 per cent).

6. Children's diet

116. Article 30 of the Code stipulates that the diet of children and infants should be free of harmful substances and pathogenic micro-organisms. The handling and advertising of children's foodstuffs and preparations are subject to authorization from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Supply. Violations are punishable by at least six months' imprisonment and a fine of between LE 500 and LE 1,000, and confiscation of the offending foodstuffs and advertising materials. The Code instructs the Ministry of Health to issue regulations listing substances harmful to children's health which must not be present in foodstuffs or their packaging.

117. The Code prohibits the processing or advertising of any food or preparation prior to registration with the Ministry of Health and the issuance of appropriate authorization, in accordance with the conditions and procedures laid down by order of the Ministry of Health with the consent of the Ministry of Supply. Until these orders are published, the regulations currently in force, namely the decrees of May 1946 and December 1953, enable most of the objectives outlined in the Children's Code to be met.

118. Since 1995, the Ministry of Education has provided schoolchildren with a balanced daily meal during the school week. At the same time, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior are working together to develop a healthy diet while ensuring compliance with all binding provisions in respect of children's dietary requirements: that the diet contains sufficient quantities of iron, proteins, vitamins, and other elements, and that the food is free of prohibited substances.

119. Some Egyptian governorates have an iodine deficiency problem. These areas are world blackspots for iodine-deficiency disorders, considered to be a principal cause of mental retardation. In 1992 the National Food Institute conducted a nationwide study in conjunction with the World Health Organization to assess the extent of the problem. The study revealed that in 9 of the 22 governorates assessed, the volume of the thyroid gland exceeded the permissible

mean deviation of 5 per cent. A number of steps have been taken in conjunction with the various sectors concerned to remedy disorders caused by inadequate iodine intake and to iodize salt in accordance with international standards.

120. Projects to deal with iodine-deficiency disorders have the following objectives:

(a) Use of all available media to raise the national profile of iodized salt as an antidote to iodine-deficiency disorders;

(b) Continuing local production of iodized salt, since iodization is the principal means of eradicating iodine-deficiency disorders by the year 2000;

(c) Ensuring that good-quality iodized salt is available in sufficient quantities in production, on the market and even in individual homes.

121. There are also plans to discontinue and prohibit the use of the free or low-cost breast-milk substitutes offered at all hospitals and maternity clinics, because it has been found that the infant mortality rate can be reduced significantly by breast-feeding, particularly during the first six months of life, and that deaths occur mainly in families which use breast-milk substitutes, owing to poverty. Synthetic breast-milk substitutes are frequently diluted with water to save money, mixed with dirty water or administered using unsterilized feeding bottles and teats. All these practices lead to increased malnutrition and expose children to the risk of infection or even death, whereas breast-milk is a balanced, wholesome and free source of nutrition that also protects children against contagious diseases. Although the overall rate of breast-feeding in Egypt is close to 95 per cent, the 1995 demographic and health survey showed that only 67.7 per cent of children aged below three months are breast-fed, and only 24.1 per cent of children aged between four and six months are fed in this manner.

122. With regard to the monitoring of child health care, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has compiled a report on the mid-term objectives of the Egyptian Decade of the Child. There are nine such objectives in the field of health and nutrition. Indicators show that Egypt has made significant progress in most health sectors and has met a number of targets. For example, the extended vaccination programme has been a success because 90 per cent of all children aged between 12 and 23 months are now covered. Needless to say, the current rates must be maintained by providing assistance to the governorates in which the programme is most needed. The Egyptian Government has allocated US$ 10 million for the purchase of serums and the Ministry of Health is currently financing an extended vaccination programme.

123. Neonatal tetanus has been practically eradicated in Egypt, where the Ministry of Health has been working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on a project to vaccinate all women of childbearing age in governorates where there is a high incidence of the disease with more than two doses of vaccine compared with just two doses in other governorates. The project also includes training for dayas and closer monitoring of ne-natal tetanus cases. The programme has brought about the complete eradication of childhood polio in 11 governorates; elsewhere the number of cases is below five per governorate. Egypt is experiencing certain problems in eradicating this disease, principally owing to the high cost of serum and the inadequate vaccination budget.

124. In the field of nutrition, Egypt is experiencing problems in overseeing the marketing of breast-milk substitutes. Despite the promulgation of a decree by the Ministry of Health prohibiting the distribution of free or low-cost substitutes at health centres, manufacturers are continuing to promote these products by a variety of means.

125. The same is true of preparations used to treat colic, which are administered to children aged barely four months whereas they are actually intended for children aged over six months. The lack of legal deterrents is one of the main problems in this area, because companies which breach WHO guidelines are not penalized.

126. Considerable efforts are being made to address the problem of low birthweight, because a child's health depends on that of its mother and how well she eats during pregnancy, and on her awareness of her needs during this period. For this reason, maternal and child protection and family planning centres offer free services so as to improve maternal and child health in impoverished areas. The cost of the special milks used to treat certain childhood illnesses is subsidized and 73 hospitals and maternity clinics are working to meet the targets established by the "Baby-friendly Hospitals" initiative.

127. The following facts should be noted with regard to monitoring of health and environmental sanitation:

(a) The supply of safe drinking water has been extended, and is now available to 87 per cent of the population;

(b) Only 31.9 per cent of the population is served by sanitation; this falls short of modern standards;

(c) Dealing with the problems of sanitation and drinking water supply is one goal of the five-year plan, and has mobilized significant private-sector investment;

(d) A mechanism for tackling environmental issues was set up in 1992 with the main aim of reducing lead pollution in air and water. A Ministry of the Environment was created during the ministerial reshuffle of July 1997.

7. Elimination of traditional practices harmful to health

128. The Ministry of Health and Population, the Ministry of Family Planning, universities and other decision-making bodies have joined forces to raise public awareness of the dangers of traditional practices and the need to abolish them. Accordingly, Ministry of Health Order No. 261 (1996) prohibits the performance of excision in hospitals, health centres and clinics alike. Excision is permitted only in the treatment of certain disorders, and only if explicitly requested by a physician.

8. Medical insurance

129. Act No. 99 (1992) stipulates that health insurance shall henceforth cover university students, who account for 2 per cent of the population. Accordingly, Ministerial Order No. 18 of 1 February 1993 instructed the general administrative office of the health insurance scheme to provide students with a full range of health services.

9. Health strategy for the period from 1997/98 to 2011/12

130. The objectives of the public health sector as defined under the Ministry of Health strategy are as follows:

(a) In preventive and therapeutic primary health care, the following maternal and child health care and nutritional measures:

- Reduction of the infant morality rate;
- Reduction of the mortality rate among children under five;
- Reduction of antenatal and perinatal maternal mortality rates;
- Eradication of childhood polio and neonatal tetanus;
- Reduction in the incidence of endemic and contagious illnesses, e.g. respiratory complaints, bilharziasis and viral hepatitis, which seriously impair children's health and development;
- Reduction in the incidence of malnutrition-related disease in children under five;
- Reduction in the rate of low birth weight;
- Reduction in the incidence of iron-deficiency anaemia among women;
- Elimination of iodine deficiency, which causes mental retardation in children;

(b) In demographic policy:

- Reduction of the annual rate of population growth;
- Reduction of the general fertility rate (one child per woman);
- Improvement of life expectancy at birth;
- Targeting of women and girls in Ministry projects in order to provide better services;

(c) In therapeutic and emergency care:

- Improvement in the quality of health services;

- Monitoring the health of pregnant women, particularly the least well-off, and pregnancy screening to ensure risk-free maternity.

131. The following policies and measures have been put in place to expedite the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

(a) Rationalization and reorientation of expenditure to take account of priorities, with special focus on primary health-care centres, communications and agreed international guidelines, especially those relevant to developing countries;

(b) More credits to be allocated to the public health sector to reflect the role which it plays in human development, accounting for 2.31 per cent of the total credits provided for under the third five-year plan;

(c) Widening of the social security net, especially to cover the least well-off children and women, by making greater use of service-providing enterprises;

(d) Intensification of efforts to help mothers, given that certain maternal problems lie at the root of high mortality rates;

(e) Preparation of a national plan to provide protection against malnutrition-related diseases;

(f) Improvement of the quality of the services offered, bringing them up to international standards, particularly with regard to lower infant mortality;

(g) Coordination between the Ministry of Health and the machinery dealing with addressing environmental issues, so as to end the shortage of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities and to deal with pollution, housing and nutrition problems.

C. Social security and child protection services and institutions (art. 18, para. 3, and art. 26)

132. Article 26 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to benefit from social security. Article 49 of the 1996 draft Children's Code states that certain categories of children are entitled to a monthly allowance from the Ministry of Social Affairs subject to the conditions and regulations laid down in the 1971 Social Security Code (No. 30), which specifies a minimum monthly grant of LE 20. The following groups are involved: children lacking one or both parents, children of unknown fathers, children whose divorced mothers have remarried or died, and children whose fathers are serving prison terms of more than 10 years.

133. As part of the Mubarak social solidarity programme launched in July 1995, the Ministry of Social Affairs is endeavouring to boost social security coverage for eligible individuals and families by encouraging participation in programmes for productive families, designed for able-bodied people. The programme involves 375 insured families numbering no more than four persons. Benefits paid under this system amount to LE 440,333,000.

D. Standard of living (art. 27, paras. 1-3)

134. Egypt's local development strategy is one of constant efforts to link economic development and the progress which it engenders with social development in all sectors of society as part of a comprehensive blueprint for sustainable development. This is illustrated by the special focus on assistance to low-income individuals and groups adversely affected by global economic restructuring programmes. The assistance is provided through a welfare and social security mechanism employing an array of methods, measures and financial means. The assistance offered to low-income families unable to provide for themselves falls within the remit of social security; the Ministry of Social Affairs makes payments to beneficiaries not contributing to the scheme, which provides allowances, grants and assistance for those no longer in employment. The first social security legislation to help needy individuals and families was promulgated in 1950 under Act No. 116, followed by Act No. 133 in 1964, Act No. 38 in 1978, Act No. 16 in 1991, Act No. 32 in 1992, Act No. 177 in 1993 and Act No. 206 in 1994, all of which increased the allowances and other benefits payable to various beneficiaries.

135. The following are available to members of the social security scheme:

(a) Allowances are payable to the following categories: orphans, widows, the elderly, divorced women, completely incapacitated persons, families of persons in detention and their children;

(b) Assistance for disadvantaged groups is available to needy families, particularly those with children. Monthly benefits are payable to pregnant women prior to confinement, infants up to the age of two years, the partially incapacitated and the infirm. These benefits may be stopped and reallocated through projects providing a fixed income to their beneficiaries. In certain cases, one-time payments may be made out of assistance funds to meet emergency needs arising during childbirth, help people who lose their jobs but have families to support, help secondary-school pupils, and in individual emergencies. One-time grants for family income-generating projects are also available.

(c) Assistance for accident victims is paid without distinction as to sex or age to individuals or groups who have suffered as a result of natural disasters or accidents such as a fire, flood, earthquake, flash flood, building collapse, collision or shipwreck. For instance, families from the towns of An-Nahda and Ain Helwan, damaged in the 1992 earthquake, were rehoused, priority being given to families with children.

VIII. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES (arts. 28, 29 and 31)

A. Education (art. 28)

136. The competent authorities have conducted a thorough investigation into the impediments to education in Egypt. This dealt with the causes of illiteracy, pupils leaving school early and dropping out during the basic education period which under the law is mandatory. The causes are these:

(a) Economic conditions which force parents to send their children to work rather than school;

(b) A cultural environment and social values inimical to the education of girls in some regions;

(c) The remoteness of teaching institutions from some localities.

1. Objectives of education policy

137. Given the findings and indicators mentioned above, the following educational objectives have been defined:

(a) To get children of school age into school in all parts of the country;

(b) To do away with adult illiteracy;

(c) To enable children, including those who work, to complete their studies;

(d) To ensure that education strikes the right balance between knowledge and learning so as to marry economic development with present-day realities and future demands.

2. Legislative underpinnings and the various stages of education

138. The provisions of the Children's Code dealing with education are consistent with those of the Constitution and the Education Act referred to in the initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.6, paras. 229-283), namely that all children are entitled to education during the first, compulsory, stage, that education is provided free of charge and that children who must work have an opportunity to catch up. Article 54 of the Code introduces punishments for employers who obstruct or prevent children from obtaining a basic education in the form of criminal penalties - imprisonment or fines.

B. Objectives of education (art. 29)

139. Given these legislative underpinnings, the educational strategy on which the third five -year plan (1992/93-1997/98) rests has the following objectives:

(a) To get all children of school age into school in all parts of the country, thereby bringing the enrolment rate, currently 85 per cent, up to 100 per cent;

(b) To step up cooperation between all mechanisms, services and organizations concerned with literacy and the Literacy Authority so as to ensure that adults benefit to the maximum from literacy services, in accordance with the President's proclamation of 1990-1999 as the Literacy Decade in Egypt;

(c) To arrange a general education for children in special circumstances, including:

(i) Children who work,

(ii) Children in remote districts,

(iii) Girls from areas where cultural values pose an obstacle to education, unless the education takes account of those values,

(iv) Handicapped children, of whose special needs account must be taken.

(d) To develop and improve teaching curricula.

140. With a view to generalizing school enrolment and reducing the drop-out rate, the Ministry of Education set up a General Agency for Educational Buildings which is working to replace antiquated buildings, complete schools under construction, maintain existing school facilities, install the equipment needed for classes, social activities, practical work and training, and provide the school supplies needed in classes and laboratories. Before this plan was drawn up, the money allocated to new school construction was inadequate and over half of the country's existing 25,000 schools did not meet the minimum standards set for teaching purposes.

141. Altogether 19,947 schools need to be built and equipped between now and the year 2002, as indicated below:

- 5,408 to cope with longer school timetables;
- 3,686 to cope with the growing population;
- 1,191 to reduce the number of pupils per class;
- 5,180 to replace antiquated schools;
- 4,482 to help failing pupils.

Existing institutions need new facilities and equipment such as laboratories, workshops, libraries, computer rooms and toilet blocks.

142. The General Agency for Educational Buildings drew up plans to build 7,500 educational establishments at different levels under the country's third five-year plan, at an average construction rate of 1,500 schools per year, and supply the equipment and material they would need. A plan staggered over six years (1991/92 -1996/97) covering the renewal and maintenance of some 3,000 educational establishments annually was drawn up.

Table 11

Changes in numbers of pupils and classes at nurseries over the course of the third five-year plan

Year	Pupils		Classes	
	No.	Increase (%)	No.	Increase (%)
1992/93	226 245	-	5 831	-
1993/94	246 100	8.8	6 642	13.9
1994/95	257 815	14	7 131	22.3
1995/96	266 502	17.8	7 747	32.9
1996/97	289 995	28.2	8 511	46

Source: Ministry of Education statistics, 1992/93 to 1996/97.

143. In the course of the third five-year plan for economic and social development (1992/93-1996/97), the Ministry of Education worked to expand nurseries, By the end of the fifth year (1996/97), the number of classes had increased by 46 per cent over the first year (1992/93) of the plan. Over the same period, the number of children increased by 28.2 per cent. Through the course of the fourth five-year plan (1997/98-2001/02), the Ministry is striving to continue this development. New nursery classrooms are being built at basic educational institutions, and 222 new classes are being set up in public language-teaching schools under the authority of the Ministry.

Table 12

Changes in numbers of pupils and classes at primary schools over the course of the third five-year plan by comparison with 1991/92

Year	Pupils		Classes	
	No.	Increase (%)	No.	Increase (%)
1991/92	150 466	-	6 542 209	-
1992/93	155 521	3.4	6 791 128	3.8
1993/94	160 635	6.8	7 049 549	7.8
1994/95	165 406	9.9	7 313 038	11.8
1995/96	168 745	12.1	7 470 437	14.2
1996/97	171 699	14.1	7 541 739	15.3

Source: Ministry of Education statistics, 1991/92 to 1996/97.

144. It can be seen from table 12 that efforts under the third five-year plan increased the number of classes by around 14.1 per cent and the number of pupils by around 15.3 per cent over the levels of the reference year, 1991/92.

145. Given the new policy on schooling, the situation has developed as follows:

Table 13

Changes in numbers of pupils and classes in preparatory education over the course of the five-year plan 1992/1997

Year	Pupils		Classes	
	No.	Increase (%)	No.	Increase (%)
1991/92	84 917	-	3 593 365	-
1992/93	80 043	- 5.7	3 344 246	- 6.9
1993/94	80 865	- 4.8	3 353 358	- 6.7
1994/95	82 229	- 3.2	3 409 127	- 5.1
1995/96	84 618	- 0.4	3 539 840	- 1.5
1996/97	87 346	2.9	3 679 325	2.4

Source: Ministry of Education statistics, 1991/92 to 1996/97.

The figures in table 13 show that the numbers of children attending preparatory education fell off in 1992/93, the first year of the third five-year plan, by comparison with 1991/92, the last year of the second plan. This decline, which results from the decision to reduce the duration of primary schooling from six years to five, does not betoken a shortage of capacity at the preparatory level.

Table 14

Changes in numbers and percentages of pupils and classes in secondary education over the third five-year plan by comparison with 1991/92

Year	Pupils		Classes	
	No.	Increase (%)	No.	Increase (%)
1991/92	16 033	-	572 026	-
1992/93	18 590	15.9	727 690	27.2
1993/94	19 613	22.3	766 944	34.1
1994/95	21 255	32.6	844 358	47.6
1995/96	21 416	33.6	817 387	42.9
1996/97	21 697	35.3	830 562	45.2

Source: Ministry of Education statistics, 1991/92 to 1996/97.

146. Table 14 reveals increases in the numbers of pupils and classes of 35.3 per cent and 45.2 per cent respectively by the academic year 1996/97 over 1991/92. The increase is due to two main factors, namely the combined cohorts [1] that embarked upon secondary schooling during that period and the attention paid to the schooling of pupils at this level.

1. Technical education

147. Article 62 of the Children's Code says that the basic objective of technical secondary education is to train technicians for industry, agriculture, administration and services and help them to develop professional skills. One aim of the third five-year plan was therefore to extend technical education to cover 70 per cent of the children entering secondary school: industrial training being given to 47 per cent, agricultural training to 13 per cent and commercial and administrative training to 40 per cent, due regard being had to their personal preferences, skills and academic records. Six sites in different towns (10 Ramadan, 6 October, Sadat, El Mahalla el-Kubra, Shubra el Kheima and El Amiriya) have been chosen for the construction of advanced training centres after the German model, and these will form the basis of the Mubarak-Kohl plan for improved technical education; each centre will have workshops for occupations of concern to each region. An agreement has been struck with industry to train and set examinations for students at the centres.

2. Combating illiteracy

148. In accordance with the constitutional clause which states that combating illiteracy is a national duty, and given that the decade 1990-1999 is the Decade for the Eradication of Illiteracy and Adult Education, it was decided to set up a Literacy Authority pursuant to Act No. 8 of 1991 on the eradication of illiteracy and adult education. The Authority has mounted a nationwide campaign to eradicate or reduce illiteracy in its generally accepted sense (illiteracy and functional illiteracy), giving priority to the least well-off and most deprived regions and social categories, in particular women in poor rural districts, so that they can learn about matters of interest to their society, problems affecting their immediate surroundings and the status of their occupations. To reach this objective, it has made efforts to draw up literacy programmes in collaboration with the National Centre for Curriculum Development, with financing from UNICEF, beginning in September 1992. The Authority also supplies textbooks and notebooks to encourage illiterates to attend and keep up with courses.

3. One-room schools

149. The aim of setting up one-room schools for girls aged between 8 and 14 is to help girls to catch up in education, inasmuch as most are deprived of schooling, particularly in poorly-off areas - small villages and isolated hamlets far from public primary schools, where the small numbers of school-age children mean that building schools is out of the question. The Minister of Education issued order No. 255, setting up one-room schools, on 17 October 1993: this lays

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[1] The combined cohorts occurred because of the shortening of primary education from six years to five. Thus all the pupils who completed preparatory schooling at the end of their fifth year joined those completing their primary education under the previous arrangements at the end of the sixth year.

down the physical size of each school, the age groups of the pupils and the number of teachers - two per school - it being understood that a general administration will have to be set up within the Ministry, together with one-room services at the various educational authorities. The third five-year plan (1992/93 - 1996/97) sets as a target the creation of 3,000 one-room schools. Table 15 shows progress in the construction of such schools over the last two years of the third plan.

Table 15

Numbers of pupils (girls) and one-room schools in academic years 1995/96 and 1996/97

School year	No. of pupils	No. of classes
1995/96	15 179	1 325
1996/97	23 658	1 574

Source: Ministry of Education, statistics for 1995 to 1997.

150. The fourth five-year plan for economic and social development (1997/98-2001/02) calls for the creation of more one-room schools, these having become a beacon accomplishment in efforts to combat illiteracy and having a decisive effect on the training of girls who have not attended school. The Ministry of Education intends to build 2,500 schools over the course of the next plan at a rate of 500 per year, pursuant to a long-term plan extending beyond the fourth five-year plan under which the Ministry reckons on building a total of 7,500 one-room schools.

151. It is intended, under the fourth five-year plan, to establish pre-university religious teaching programmes and set up 50 one-room primary institutions in remote parts where there is a lot of interest in religious education.

152. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has also adopted an experimental literacy project, known as the Children's Overall Development, Integrated Protection and Literacy Project, which is being put into effect in nine governorates. The aims of this are:

(a) To encourage the general public to become actively involved in all aspects of development so as to benefit from the services available and improve their incomes through their own efforts;

(b) To ensure they benefit fully from health-care, education, social and other services offered by the State;

(c) To improve families'economic situation and raise their standards of living.

153. The project strategy rests on:

(a) The organization of society to ensure constructive participation;

(b) A honing of skills in different services;

(c) Optimum use of local raw materials to increase family incomes.

Project execution has been articulated around three broad focuses: organization of society; the honing of skills in health-care, education (including literacy), social, cultural and economic services and in the fields of the environment, youth and family planning; and economic development, which is basically concerned with increasing family incomes.

4. Improved services for disabled pupils

154. The services of the General Department for Special Education see to the physical, social and psychological rehabilitation and education of the various categories of handicapped persons. Table 16 indicates the increase in the numbers of special classes and pupils over the course of the third five-year plan. It also illustrates changes in the numbers of handicapped pupils and classes offering three types of special education - for the visually impaired, for the hard of hearing and for the mentally deficient - since 1992/93, the first year of the third five-year plan, when there were 1,576 classes for 15,572 pupils, as against 2,783 classes for 23,531 pupils by the end of the fifth year of the plan. The increase is due to the creation of schools and classes to provide special education for handicapped pupils, for whom classes have also been set aside in new schools with a view to eradicating the obstacles that currently exist between normal and handicapped children.

Table 16

Changes in numbers of handicapped pupils and special classes, five-year plan 1992/1993-1996/1997

Education for the:	No. of classes					No. of pupils				
	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97
Visually impaired	187	205	224	245	261	1 865	2 135	2 159	2 417	2 414
Hard of hearing	622	676	753	824	1 412	6 762	7 024	8 496	9 133	10 477
Mentally deficient	767	813	986	1 010	1 110	6 945	7 535	8 169	9 645	10 712
Total	1 576	1 694	1 963	2 079	2 783	15 572	16 694	18 824	21 195	25 531

Source: Ministry of Education statistics, 1992/93 to 1996/97.

Committees have been set up to define in broad outline a new special education system based on a modern strategy, in preparation for the first national conference on special education in Egypt.

5. Improvements in teaching quality

155. The Ministry is striving to balance the objectives of knowledge acquisition and children's development, allowing a child to devote at least 30 per cent of its time to learning activities and practical skills so that it can appreciate the teaching while developing as an individual, and reducing the content of the subjects studied, tailoring them to what the child needs to know so

that the child can grasp the information, analyse it, solve the problems with which it is confronted, develop self-acceptance and adapt to its environment. To this end, the following action has been carried out under the third five-year plan 1992/93 to 1996/97:

(a) Improving curricula

156. The Ministry takes care to ensure that teaching content does indeed develop in children the skills and abilities necessary to understand the facts and challenges of modern-day life. Steps taken in this area include the following:

(i) Since academic year 1991/92, all school curricula have been subject to constant revision to weed out duplication. By this means between 15 and 20 per cent of 1991/92 curriculum content has been dropped.

(ii) School curricula, particularly for primary education, have been enriched with new subjects of value in the development of the personality. One key new subject thus introduced is the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been included in the basic education curriculum. Teaching on this subject occurs in the context of the rights of the child and has been adapted for children at this educational level. Curricula have also been enriched with subjects designed to make children aware of health issues and draw their attention to environmental protection and human rights-related matters such as women's rights and tolerance.

(b) Improving primary and preparatory teaching

157. The Ministry of Education has held two conferences to consider how to improve teaching curricula at the primary and preparatory levels. Among the recommendations made there and since put into effect, the following may be mentioned:

(i) Encouraging scientific reflection and logical reasoning among pupils, along with a sense of citizenship, and promoting religious and moral values;

(ii) Alerting pupils to the sciences of the future and their applications;

(iii) Endowing them with a capacity for constructive participation.

Preparations are under way for a national conference on improvements to secondary teaching.

(c) Improving the level of teachers

158. Efforts are being made to ensure that primary schoolteachers are well-trained, putting an end to training at middle-level establishments and instead setting up departments within teaching faculties where they can obtain diplomas equivalent to university degrees, thus making them more efficient and teaching them new teaching methods. Primary teachers can also take

in-service training courses in new subjects, and benefit from a programme now in preparation which will offer courses abroad to study new teaching methods. In parallel with this, they have seen an improvement in their material situation thanks to financial incentives and better payment for examination-related work.

(d) Modernizing science facilities

159. A comprehensive plan has been drawn up, which includes the following:

(i) A greater role for teaching assistants;

(ii) Redeveloping the General Teaching Assistants Directorate building, constructing television studios, computer rooms, rooms for graphics and animation, copiers and modern workshops for montage, graphics reproduction and micro-photography, besides providing classic equipment such as cards, models and microfiches;

(iii) Providing schools with teaching materials and laboratories.

Schools are currently being equipped with modern laboratories for science subjects and with computers. So far 11,000 computers have been distributed to 1,000 secondary schools, and computer rooms have been fitted with air-conditioning.

(e) Updating textbooks

160. Textbooks for primary, preparatory, secondary and general technical education have been updated and guides to pupil assessment and handbooks on each of the subjects taught from the fourth year of primary to the third year of secondary education have been produced. So far 39 million copies have been printed and distributed. To reduce the outlay for Egyptian families, the Book Division of the Ministry of Education has taken charge of the manufacture of copy books and rough-work books which it distributes to pupils.

(f) Improved evaluation and examination methods

161. The National Centre for Educational Evaluation and Testing was set up to improve the methods used in examinations and pupil evaluation. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the National Centre for Educational Research and Development, made a comparative study of the examination arrangements in general secondary education used in developed countries and those used in Egypt. The upshot was a new set of rules allowing pupils to take examinations in two stages - the first at the end of the second year and the second at the end of the third year - introducing compulsory and optional subjects, and offering pupils the opportunity to sit examinations more than once. Examination arrangements have also been adjusted to take account of modern assessment procedures.

6. Pupil health and welfare

(a) School activities

162. School activities are at present attracting increasing interest. The Ministry of Education has published regulations on school libraries further to Ministerial order No. 78 of 23 March 1993, so that schools can bring themselves up to date with the modern methods employed in education and libraries. It has set about supplying school libraries with material, including documents providing essential information for a variety of practical purposes such as those used in the "Reading for All" campaign over the summer holidays. It has also recently set up a "Sources of Knowledge" programme covering a variety of information media which it puts at users' disposal, and has connected schools to the worldwide Internet network. It pays due attention to other educational activities in areas such as art, journalism, school theatre, music, sports, scouting, travel and camping.

(b) School meals

163. The Ministry takes a special interest in school meals, given their beneficial effects on pupils' health and performance. The children entitled to receive school meals are, in order of priority:

(i) Children at all levels of schooling in Saharan regions;

(ii) Children at all levels of schooling in Saharan regions;

(iii) Children receiving a special education;

(iv) Primary-school children in rural areas in all governorates and in the poor districts of urban areas;

(v) Children whose school activities require physical effort, such as those attending agricultural, industrial or sports institutions.

Table 17

Budget allocations for school meals (in Egyptian pounds) and numbers of children benefiting by reference to 1991/92

Year	Budget allocation		Children benefiting	
	Amount	Increase %	Number	Increase %
1991/92	35 806 594	-	3 019 130	-
1992/93	47 192 424	31.8	3 325 000	10.1
1993/94	50 907 700	42.2	3 909 914	29.5
1994/95	100 383 000	180.3	4 500 000	49

Source: Ministry of Education, Educational achievements in four years, Mubarak national project, October 1995.

School meals are used as a means of combating ailments widespread among pupils, anaemia in particular. Schools in Wadi Al Jadid governorate, for example, serve pupils meals enriched in iodine to combat goitre, which is endemic there.

C. Leisure and cultural activities (art. 31)

164. Culture in a child is a matter of some importance in Egypt, since it is felt that the culture a child receives, and in which it lives, shapes its adult personality and the future of society as a whole. On this principle, the importance of culture has been legislatively enshrined in the Constitution (arts. 16 and 17), in Presidential decree No. 54 of 1988 establishing the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and in the document drawn up for the Egyptian Decade of the Child (1989-1999). By Ministerial order No. 130 of 1980, the Ministry of Culture established the National Centre for Children's Culture which conducts research with a view to promoting children's culture.

165. This general outlook, promoting children's culture by setting it in an explicit legislative framework, gives an indication of the literary and scientific scope of the national campaign waged under the leadership of the President's wife, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, since 1991 under the slogan "Reading for All": to encourage children of all ages, in all parts of the country, urban and rural, to take up reading and enter the world of learning. A variety of means are employed: competitions, frequent children's libraries, and books for children published at modest prices.

166. Various entities and ministries are concerned with culture for children. Before going into detail about the activities of the different bodies responsible, we wish to mention some specific items:

(a) The Ministry of Culture's five-year plan for 1992-1997 emphasizes children's culture in villages: it lays down conditions governing the establishment of children's libraries, making provision for all the country's main villages to be covered by the end of the plan;

(b) The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Higher Council for Youth and Sports have collaborated in setting up clubs for children and young people (age 6-18) with programmes that combine cultural, social and sporting activities with cultural and recreational excursions;

(c) As part of a scheme to set up a children's television channel:

(i) there are plans for a special-purposes studio to create broadcasts designed, in both content and presentation, for children;

(ii) a cartoon-dubbing studio has come into operation;

(iii) a special centre has been set up to train children's programme presenters;

(d) Children's radio, which is actively supported, combines entertainment with stimuli to creativity and innovation, while fostering children's interest in positive values;

(e) The General Information Service plays a leading role in children's culture. Its contribution is twofold:

(i) exhibitions and film-screenings in children's clubs, through the intermediary of the information centres situated in every governorate;

(ii) publication of works concerned with children's welfare, including one series featuring the works of great writers, thinkers and scholars in a form accessible to children, and the publication in clear, simple language of scientific works allowing children access to a complete understanding of natural phenomena, regional and world geography, fauna and flora, the scientific discoveries of antiquity and the present day, and the protection of nature.

1. Role of the ministries, institutions and mechanisms operating in the field of children's culture

(a) National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

167. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood began work on a draft Children's Code in 1989; the Code was published in Act No. 12 of 1996. Children's culture is dealt with in articles 87 to 93:

(i) Children must be induced to take an interest in culture in its many forms and turn it to advantage. Culture is a continuous process, beginning at birth and extending throughout life;

(ii) The State has an obligation to satisfy children's needs in all fields of culture - literature, the arts and knowledge - and link culture with social values, the human heritage and scientific advance;

(iii) The State has an obligation to create children's libraries and culture clubs in all villages, public spaces, cinemas and theatres. The arrangements for giving effect to this provision to be specified in a corresponding decree;

(iv) The publication, display or distribution of any printed material or visual or audio product for children that is apt to arouse undesirable urges, present in a favourable light behaviour contrary to social values, or push children towards delinquency, is banned. Violators are subject to a criminal penalty (a fine), and the offending publication or product will be seized;

(v) Children are banned from cinemas and other public spaces where films or works contrary to public morals are on display. The managers of such premises are required to indicate the appropriate age limit clearly, in Arabic, both at the premises and in any related advertising. Violators are subject to a criminal penalty (a fine).

(b) Ministry of Culture

168. The Ministry of Culture and its supporting agencies strive to give children the means and opportunity to discover culture through the mechanisms laid down in the five-year plan. These include:

(i) The National Centre for Child Culture: set up in 1987, this specializes in research into children's problems and needs with a view to the formulation of a national strategy. It has so far published 13 works on a variety of topics relating to culture for children. It has also produced specimen works of art which have been displayed at nine exhibitions, and has arranged 21 scientific lectures, eight demonstrations to accompany national events, three plastic-arts workshops, four touring cultural exhibitions, four training courses in English and French, and 12 children's competitions.

(ii) The General Authority for Palaces of Culture, which manages 330 palaces of culture in 26 governorates. Twenty-one palaces, in 16 different governorates, are especially for children. The Authority is also responsible for 386 culture libraries in the governorates. Every palace of culture includes a children's club where children can engage in a variety of activities. The Administration also arranges touring exhibitions ("caravans") which enable children to take part in artistic and cultural activities including films and theatrical presentations.

Table 18

Main events for children at palaces of culture in 1994

Field	Music	Popular arts	Cinema	Plastic arts	Lectures
No. of events	3	16	3	4	8
No. of attendees	3 500	4 900	900	1 200	750

Source: Ministry of Culture, Yearbook of Cultural Statistics, Cairo, 1995.

(iii) The National Film Centre, whose main accomplishments in 1994 were:

- Two screenings of cultural films for children;
- The production, by the newsreel and films-for-the-young unit, of three fictionally-based short films;
- The selection of two scenarios by the Puppet Film Unit, which concentrates on behavioural problems in children;

- The production by the Special Effects Unit of three cartoons combining constructive criticism, entertainment and attempts to improve children's behaviour;

- The production of three films by the Cartoon Unit. Two further films are in preparation, and several are in production.

(iv) The National Theatre Centre, which has run a puppet theatre since 1959 and a national children's theatre since 1981. It stages plays for children and seeks to interest young people in the theatre in all its forms (drama, sung productions, musical comedy).

(v) The National Centre for the Plastic Arts, which in 1994 set up a workshop to foster children's creativity in the plastic arts, awakening a taste for art and an aesthetic awareness. It has staged three workshops in the Moktar Museum, each of which has concluded with a competition.

(vi) The Academy of Arts, which runs several artistic institutes offering cultural and academic instruction in accordance with curricula laid down by the Ministry of Education besides artistic subjects. Children are accepted for enrolment between the ages of 6 and 8. Their talents are developed and honed through study and practice, and they receive training in a variety of artistic fields. The institutes include:

- The Higher Institute of Arab Music; founded in 1929 under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, it has operated under the authority of the Ministry of Culture since 1967. Its objective is to train specialists in Arab musicology to meet demand in cultural, information and educational bodies. A variety of musical instruments, composition and singing are taught. Children holding a certificate of completion of preparatory studies (three years of post-primary schooling) can take their secondary education there. Courses last three years. From its foundation to 1996, the Institute has graduated 66 classes of pupils.

- The Higher Institute of Music (Conservatoire): established in 1959, the Conservatoire operates under the authority of the Ministry of Culture. It accepts children from the age of 6 onwards, from primary to secondary level. It awards bachelors', masters' and doctors' degrees, and offers practical instruction in a number of instruments, singing and opera.

- The School of Ballet: founded in 1958, it offers classes ranging from beginners to advanced. Its objective is to train high-quality artistes and to promote ballet as an art form.

(vii) The General Book Authority, which mounts a children's book fair every November and publishes a series of children's books: 13 titles came out in 1995. It also arranges short-story-writing workshops and runs a competition for the best article, piece of fiction and poem. Besides this, it publishes a series of works for the family library: 89 titles appeared in 1995.

(viii) The General Administration of the National Culture Centre (opera house): the Egyptian Opera, opened in 1871 under the Turkish Viceroy Ismail, was renovated and reopened under Hosni Mubarak in 1980. Presidential decree No. 313 of 1989 defined its terms of reference as follows: to be a beacon for Egyptian culture, to develop a sense of belonging to a national culture and civilization, to introduce and propagate the fine arts, to strengthen artistic links between Egypt and other countries, and to put on high-level performances of music, opera, ballet, the expressive arts, lyric theatre, the plastic arts, traditional music and recitation. The National Centre runs a children's choir and ballet troupe. It has put on three children's choral concerts, mounted three concerts in association with the national Arab music ensemble, and arranged six concerts to mark the festival of children's cinema.

(c) Ministry of Social Affairs

169. The Ministry of Social Affairs sets up children's clubs to keep children between the ages of 6 and 15 sensibly, healthily and productively occupied in their leisure time under the supervision of trained staff and specialists in various artistic fields. The clubs cater for the children socially and educationally, in specially created settings. The country has 325 of them, with a total capacity of about 35,000 children, but according to the Ministry's Statistical Office they actually cater for 44,000 - 23,800 boys and 20,200 girls. In 1994, children between the ages of 6 and 15 represented a population of 14.5 million.

170. Children's libraries are housed on children's club or community organization premises. They provide opportunities for children to engage in cultural and artistic pursuits; they can place works at children's disposal and give them access to knowledge; and recreational and cultural activities and competitions can be staged there. The country has around 285 such libraries with a readership of 190,000 children, providing a coverage of approximately 1.12 per cent in the 6-18-year-old age group (16.9 million individuals in 1994).

(d) Ministry of Information

171. The Ministry of Information regards the media, radio and television in particular, as the most potent means of bringing culture to children. It therefore intervenes to enable magazine programmes to show children what culture exists in various domains, and to ensure the production of special programmes for children.

172. The Radio and Television Union's overall plan for 1996-1997 in the information sphere includes the following objectives and policies:

(i) Involving psychologists and pedagogues in the production of children's programming;

(ii) Focusing on village children and designing programmes suited to their environment;

(iii) Devoting particular attention to the handicapped, depending on the nature of their disabilities, and designing programmes to match;

(iv) Designing programmes suited to different age brackets;

(v) Emphasizing the development of rational thought, creativity and innovation, strengthening the sense of national belonging, fostering a sense of beauty and inculcating an awareness of the importance of protecting the environment.

The plan includes many radio and television programmes which answer to these objectives.

(e) Higher Council for Youth and Sports

173. Article 10 of the Constitution says that the State guarantees the protection of childhood, watches over children and young people and provides them with suitable conditions in which to develop their vocations. The Higher Council for Youth and Sports is primarily responsible for honouring this commitment. The document drawn up for the Egyptian Decade of the Child covers the protection of childhood and young people and the development of creativity. Among other things, it stipulates that the wherewithal to practise hobbies and sports which develop creativity among children must be provided in governorates and villages, and that such facilities must be available throughout the country by the year 2000.

174. The 1992-1997 five-year plan specifies the arrangements by which these general principles will be put into effect by a variety of entities including, within the Higher Council, the Youth Department which looks after 6- to 18-year-olds. The Department runs cultural and artistic activities for the benefit of the largest possible numbers of young people in the various governorates:

(i) It looks after the youth centres, which are the legal entities responsible for providing Council services in the villages and elsewhere;

(ii) It focuses on projects reaching out to the maximum number of young people in the 6- to 18-year-old age group, expanding the circle of beneficiaries and designing national training programmes covering all the activities offered by the Department on a democratic footing;

(iii) It looks for young people with leadership qualities and brings them together in intellectual and political gatherings with suitable follow-up in order to raise a generation of leaders;

(iv) It applies the national heritage to advantage in the realms of games, the arts and literature;

(v) It works in constant coordination and cooperation with the various bodies that help to carry out its projects, so as to optimize results;

(vi) It secures the assistance of experts, specialists and university professors in order to ensure that its programmes reflect the current state of knowledge in all domains;

(vii) Youth clubs operate through the various youth sections, each of which has at least 25 members. Nine hundred and nineteen such sections function in accordance with the resources available to them.

Table 19

Number of youth club sections and type of activities

Type of activity	No.
Art and culture (art: 309; cultural circles: 7)	326
Scouting (boys and girls) (cubs: 69; scouts and guides: 55)	324
Sports (sport associations: 10; sporting events: 40; travelling sports events: 27)	168
Sciences (40 science clubs + 15 computer centres)	55
Environment (ecological societies)	27
Brass bands	19
Total	919

Source: Higher Council for Youth and Sports, Youth Department.

In 1994, almost 317,000 people took part in youth club programmes. The breakdown of this number by types of activity is given below.

Table 20

Type of youth club activity and number of participants

Type of activity	No. of participants
Culture and religion	232 609
Plastic arts	37 855
Camps	27 932
Public services	18 199
Total	316 595

Source: Higher Council for Youth and Sports, Youth Department.

175. The youth and sports divisions within the governorates monitor club activities and produce reports as necessary, in coordination with the services responsible. Youth clubs at each youth centre, urban or village, have to have the requisite facilities and staff available. Each section has at least 25 members. Each section runs its own activities.

176. Youth clubs take an interest in the activities of workmen's clubs inasmuch as they seek to protect young workers. They also take an interest in sporting clubs, looking after the under-18s among their members. The areas in which each club is active depend on the facilities available to it. Altogether there are 233 youth clubs in the various governorates, each one having at least 25 members.

Table 21

Number of youth clubs and their locations

Venue	No.
Youth centres (towns and villages)	210
Workmen's clubs	12
Sports clubs	11
Total	233

2. Artistic and cultural pursuits: music, choral singing, plastic arts, expressive arts, cultural circles

177. Some youth clubs receive special support under the programmes for sections for gifted children, who are regarded as a human resource to be cherished, encouraged, awakened to spiritual and human values and protected from extremism and delinquency.

178. Music is regarded as one of the most important factors in the development of the individual and the awakening of sensitivity to art, whether through listening or through playing an instrument. The Youth Department seeks to develop and hone artistic sensitivity by setting up musical ensembles (brass instruments and strings) at youth centres throughout the country.

3. Scientific activities

179. Science clubs and computer centres seek to nurture scientific vocations and develop scientific aptitudes, encouraging young people to engage in scientific pursuits, stimulating their creativity and supporting their efforts by providing computer training.

4. Sporting activities

180. Playing team games enables young people to devote themselves to sporting pursuits, thus remaining physically fit and maintaining their bodily, mental and muscular trim.

5. Scouting

181. Scouting seeks to instil principles and knowledge in boys and girls, endowing them with skills that will enable them to play a useful role and participate constructively in the shaping of society, through coordination between the Scout Federation and regional troops.

6. Inculcating an awareness of environmental issues and sustainable development

182. The Egyptian Government is eager to encourage participation by children in environmental protection programmes and activities and to make children aware, beyond the local level, of the environmental problems that affect the planet as a whole and concern all nations: dangers due to human activity, global warming, climate change and natural disasters affecting the continent of Africa, Egypt in particular.

183. As part of this consciousness-raising campaign, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, in coordination with the competent national authorities, is conducting an ambitious experimental regional programme in primary schools in a number of governorates in Upper Egypt and the coastal region. In cooperation with the Higher Council for Youth and Sports, the Environmental Agency and the Ministry of Education, it is also mounting an education and consciousness-raising campaign for pre-primary and primary-level children. The objective is to make children aware of the link between the need to protect the environment, on the one hand, and participation in the development process by making use of local natural resources, on the other. To this end, children are encouraged to display creativity by engaging in graphic arts and simple manual tasks and by staging exhibitions.

184. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood has also, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and certain governorates, begun to train rural children aged between 10 and 12 in this area, arranging for them to participate in an international seminar on the environment and sustainable development in the Mediterranean held under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development in Tunis from 20 to 28 August 1997.

185. Given the growing interest that world opinion has been taking in global environmental questions, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood intends to put forward a programme of cooperation with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies highlighting the link between children, the environment and development activities. Egyptian children in their early years of schooling are regarded, for the purposes of this programme, as a natural vector for spreading concepts within the family and small associations. Through them, the intention is to make people more aware of the importance of sustainable development throughout the twenty-first century. As consultations are currently under way between the competent national bodies and international donors offering concrete support, this ambitious project will be discussed in the next periodic report of Egypt.

IX. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES
(arts. 22, 32 to 36, 37 (b) to (d), 38 to 40)

A. Children in situations of emergency

186. It must be pointed out that articles 22, 38 and 39 of the Convention, relating respectively to refugee children, children in armed conflicts, and the physical and psychological rehabilitation and social reintegration of such children, refer to situations which do not obtain in Egypt; as a result, no special provision is made for them under Egyptian law.

B. Children involved with the system of administration of juvenile justice

1. The administration of juvenile justice

187. The ways in which civilizations and cultures approach the question of criminal justice for children depend on perceptions of juvenile delinquency, its causes and treatment, and the factors underlying delinquency. When the various stages of a child's physical and mental development and the development of its faculties are misunderstood, and it is not realized that there is a link between that process of maturing and the social conditions that make for delinquency, legislators are prone - as they have been in many societies in the past - to visit on misconduct by children the penalties laid down for adults. On the other hand, in civilizations and cultures which are aware of the psychological, mental and social problems that children face, the emphasis is less on punishment than on recovery, less on repression than on rehabilitation and reform.

188. Egyptian legislators became aware of this at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A law promulgated in 1826 differentiates among the kinds of treatment meted out to delinquent children. Article 133 stipulates that children aged under 12 years shall not be subject to criminal penalties but interned in an educational establishment or handed over to their parents. The Penal Code of 1883 devotes a separate chapter to minors: it states that children aged under seven years are not criminally responsible, and sets forth specific measures for dealing with delinquents aged over seven but under 15. In 1904, the age up to which young delinquents were subject to special penal measures was raised to 17. The notion of exposing a child to delinquency was introduced in a special edict on young vagrants in 1908.

189. The 1937 Penal Code, which is still in effect, retains all these provisions on the treatment of minors, enlarging on or reworking them as appropriate. By virtue of Act No. 31 of 1974, juvenile justice is dealt with in a separate code which anticipates the Convention on the Rights of the Child in setting the age of majority at 18 years. The substantive and procedural provisions of this code constitute a leap forward in penal justice for children. The inclination at the time being to produce a complete code on children, Act No. 31 of 1974 was repealed and all the rules on penal justice for children were put together under chapter VIII of the Children's Code (published by Act No. 12 of 1996), the crowning accomplishment of a long legislative effort. The Egyptian legislature drew on all the relevant international agreements, including the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules).

190. The Children's Code deals with penal justice for children in chapter VIII, articles 94 to 143. There it sets forth the substantive and procedural provisions that must be followed when a child commits an offence of any kind, or when it is exposed to delinquency, and the measures and penalties that are applicable.

(a) Proportionality between criminal responsibility, punishment and the child's age

191. This principle applies as follows:

(i) Up to the age of seven: complete criminal incompetence;

(ii) Between 7 and 15 years: the child is held criminally responsible, but is not subject to any penalty. The following measures may be applied:

- a reprimand;
- being placed in the care of its parents or the person exercising parental authority;
- vocational training;
- imposition of specific, mandatory tasks;
- being placed on probation;
- placement in a welfare institution;
- committal to a special-purpose hospital establishment.

These provisions are consistent with articles 4 and 18 of the Beijing Rules.

(iii) A child who has reached the age of 15 but not yet 16 and commits an offence attracting the death penalty or forced labour in perpetuity or for a specified period escapes this punishment and is sentenced to imprisonment instead. If the applicable penalty is detention, the court will replace it with probation or placement in a welfare institution;

(iv) Children aged between 16 and 18 years escape the death penalty and forced labour in perpetuity or for a specified period, these punishments being replaced by detention.

In any event, measures involving deprivation of children's liberty are not enforced at ordinary prisons but in special penal institutions pursuant to a decision by the Minister of Social Affairs by agreement with the Minister of the Interior (art. 141). These provisions are in keeping with the Beijing Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (arts. 17 and 26).

(b) Exposure to delinquency

192. While prescribing special penal treatment for juvenile offenders, Egyptian legislators have sought to protect children exposed to delinquency before they ever commit an offence. They have defined situations in which a child might be exposed to delinquency, viz. begging, activities related to debauchery and prostitution, keeping company with delinquents, repeated truancy, bad conduct on the part of those exercising parental authority, and sickness. These provisions, too, are in keeping with the Beijing Rules.

(c) Protecting children against delinquency

193. Children found in the above situations attract the measures below:

(i) A written warning issued to the person exercising parental authority over the child, to see that the child behaves itself properly in the future; in the case of a repeat offence, the child's guardian will be held criminally liable. This is in addition to the loss of parental authority in the cases prescribed by Act No. 118 of 1952 on parental authority over the person;

(ii) Committal of the child to specialized hospital establishment appropriate to its state of health;

(iii) One of the measures mentioned previously, depending on the situation.

(d) Safeguards accompanying criminal proceedings against delinquent children

194. Under the criminal justice system, children are subject to the following safeguards:

(i) Children aged under 15 years may not be placed in pre-trial detention;

(ii) The juvenile court has exclusive jurisdiction over any offence committed by a child, whether it be a serious or lesser offence, except for serious offences committed by a child aged over 15 with an adult accomplice, in which case the minor and the adult are tried by the criminal courts, which are required to place the minor under mandatory social surveillance;

(iii) The juvenile court is composed of three judges assisted by two experts, at least one must be a woman; attendance by the woman at the hearings is mandatory. The experts submit to the court a report setting out the findings of an inquiry into all aspects of the child's situation before judgement is passed. The court must hear a statement by the social worker assigned to the case, who reports on the causes of delinquency and suggests remedial measures;

(iv) Decisions by the juvenile court may be appealed to a Court of Appeal composed of three judges, two at least of whom must have the rank of court president, assisted by two experts at least one of whom is a woman. The procedure is the same as in the juvenile court;

(v) The juvenile court may conduct hearings at the social welfare establishment in which the child has been placed;

(vi) In criminal cases the child must be defended by a lawyer. If the child does not select defence counsel, the public procurator or the court shall assign one in accordance with the rules laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure. If a child charged with a lesser offence is aged 15 or over and has no lawyer, the court can appoint one for it;

(vii) Hearings in juvenile courts are attended only by the juvenile defendant's immediate family, the witnesses, the lawyers, the social workers assigned to the case and other persons duly authorized by decision of the court. The judges are empowered to have the child removed from the courtroom after hearing it, or to have any of the above-mentioned persons removed if they consider it necessary;

(viii) The president of the juvenile court rules on disputes relating to the execution of sentence. He, or one of the court experts representing him, is required by law to visit detention centres, vocational training centres, special-purpose hospitals and any other institution that cooperates with the court and has been placed under its jurisdiction, every three months;

(ix) The social worker assigned to the case must see to the enforcement of the measures ordered in respect of convicted juveniles, monitor their behaviour, give advice to individuals wielding parental authority, and report periodically to the court;

(x) In all cases, the court has the authority to annul or modify any measures taken in respect of a child, or to substitute a different measure in the child's best interests;

(xi) In any event, a child may not be placed in an institution for more than 10 years in the event of a serious offence, 5 years in the case of a lesser offence, or 3 years in the event of exposure to delinquency;

(xii) Sentences entailing deprivation of liberty must be served in special penal establishments;

(xiii) Juvenile courts have no jurisdiction over civil cases.

Safeguards (i) to (xii) are entirely consistent with the Beijing Rules.

2. Children deprived of their liberty, including any form of detention, imprisonment or placement in custodial settings (arts. 37 (a) and (d))

(a) Legal justification for placement orders

195. As stated above, under Egyptian law, any decision relating to a juvenile delinquent or child exposed to delinquency - whether a preventive or corrective measure or a sentence

entailing deprivation of liberty - must be handed down by a specialized court composed of judges who, as members of the judiciary, are subject to legally prescribed safeguards. The law governs the proceedings in such courts, ensuring that children are never deprived of their liberty illegally or arbitrarily. Furthermore, deprivation of liberty as a readily available preventive measure is left to the discretion of the court. It is resorted to only if the interests of the child require it and after the alternatives mentioned above have been exhausted.

(b) Professional and human skills of people working with children

196. The human dimension is vital to the proper accomplishment of their tasks by the various institutions responsible for children's affairs, from the courts down to the various welfare centres. It can be seen in the way the minor is treated from the time he or she commits an offence or is exposed to delinquency until his or her rehabilitation, training and reintegration into society. Under this procedure, three important missions have been entrusted respectively to juvenile judges, the deputy public procurator, and the expert and social worker.

(i) Juvenile judges

197. Juvenile judges are ordinary judges who are assigned to this function only after meeting very strict conditions and undergoing thorough training. They are top-scoring graduates of faculties of law who, after undergoing numerous tests, are taken on at the first level of the procurator's office, then follow intensive training courses at the end of which they qualify and practise as public procurators - noble members of the magistracy - for several years, until they are at least 30. They are considered suitable to serve as judges if they have a good reputation and show evidence of their ability as children's judges. By law, however, three further conditions are imposed on them: the president of a juvenile court must have more experience than an ordinary judge, and hold at least the rank of court president; the judge must be of a personality that fits him to work with children: this is assessed by the Minister of Justice after a judicial inquiry, by the president of the court of first instance in which the judge serves, and by the General Assembly of Court Judges; lastly, the judge must successfully have followed specialist courses in the problems facing juveniles organized by the National Centre for Judicial Studies and the National Centre for Social and Criminal Studies.

(ii) Deputy public procurators

198. The rigorous conditions governing the appointment of deputy public procurators who will be dealing with minors have already been mentioned. The public procurator's office has very little contact with minors, but the competence, training and sensitivity of the deputy serve as a guarantee to minors that the most appropriate official will be there beside them during that brief period before they appear before the court (Act No. 73 of 1972 on the judiciary elaborates on points (i) and (ii)).

(iii) The expert and social worker

199. Lastly, the conditions governing the appointment of social workers and juvenile court experts are laid down in order No. 139 of 1974 by the Minister of Social Affairs, as amended by

order No. 130 of 1996. In particular, only holders of a university degree in social services awarded by a law faculty, with a qualification in work with juveniles, specialist training in social work or extensive experience with the juvenile courts, can serve in either capacity.

200. The conditions governing the selection of juvenile judges and deputy public procurators, social workers and experts attached to the juvenile courts, as set out above, illustrate Egypt's concern to appoint the best qualified people to positions with a decisive influence over minors' future.

3. Physical and psychological rehabilitation and social reintegration

(a) Institutions

201. As indicated above, legislators have shown as much concern for juvenile offenders as for minors exposed to delinquency. When a child is in danger or exposed to delinquency, the law calls for it to be committed to a special-purpose hospital institution if its state of physical or mental health so warrants, or placed in one of the institutions reserved for minors, viz. social welfare centres for those in danger or correctional homes for offenders. Under article 141 of the Children's Code, moreover, "sentences entailing restrictions of liberty handed down against minors shall be served in special penal establishments under arrangements established by decision of the Minister of Social Affairs by agreement with the Minister of the Interior".

202. Social welfare institutions include not only public establishments but also institutes set up by local associations that have been authorized by the Ministry of Social Affairs to take care of children. Minors are thus taken in hand by the public authorities in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Information on social welfare institutions and the authorities to which they are subordinate appears below.

Table 22

Social welfare institutions for minors (Cairo and Gizeh)

No.	Name of institution	Administration or province	Type	Inmates	Overseeing authority	Capacity	No. of children placed
1	Gizeh children's home	Ministry secretariat	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	General Egyptian Social Welfare Association	500	185
2	Al-Matariyya Al-Horriyya Institute	Cairo	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Ain-Shams Welfare Administration	120	82
3	Zeitoun (Oum-Kalthoum) Social Welfare Institute	Cairo	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Minors Protection Association	60	40
4	Ain-Shams Insitute for Under-age Girls	Cairo	Open facility	Girls exposed to sexual delinquency	Cairo Social Defence Association	50	42

No	Name of institution	Administration or province	Type	Inmates	Overseeing authority	Capacity	No. of children placed
5	Al-Qobba Integrated Social Unit for Girls	Cairo	Open facility	Girls exposed to delinquency	Egyptian Association for the Protection of Mothers and Children	50	49
6	Old Cairo Popular Home for Boys	Cairo	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Social Reform Association	27	23
7	Agouza Social Welfare Institute for Girls	Gizeh	Open facility	Girls exposed to delinquency	Gizeh Social Defence Association	120	97
8	Pilot Welfare Centre	Cairo	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency ("student hospitality")	General Egyptian Social Welfare Association	35	13
9	Institute for Mentally Deficient Girls	Cairo	Open facility	Girls exposed to delinquency	General Egyptian Social Welfare Association	50	36
10	Intellectual Training Institute for Minors	Gizeh	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Al-Matariyya Intellectual Development Association	75	48
11	Institute for Stray and Handicapped Minors	Gizeh	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Al-Matariyya Intellectual Development Association	40	36
12	Classification and Orientation Centre	Ministry secretariat	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	General Egyptian Social Welfare Association	50	33
Total						1 177	684

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, General Welfare Department, May 1997

Table 23

Social welfare institutions for minors (governorates)

Governorate	Name of institution	Administr-ation or province	Type	Inmates	Overseeing authority	Capacity	No of children placed
Alexandria	Integrated Social Unit for Boys	Alexandria	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Alexandria Welfare Association	50	27
	Al-Minsheyya Welfare Unit for Minors	Alexandria	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Alexandria Children's Protection Association	100	60

Governorate	Name of institution	Administr-ation or province	Type	Inmates	Overseeing authority	Capacity	No. of children placed
	Integrated Social Unit for Girls	Alexandria	Open facility	Girls exposed to delinquency	Alexandria Children's Protection Association	100	40
	Guidance Centre for Under-age Girls	Alexandria	Open facility	Girls exposed to sexual delinquency	Alexandria Social Defence Association	100	40
Al-Buheyra	Al-Abadiyya Integrated Social Unit for Boys	Al-Buheyra	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Al-Buheyra Social Defence Association	100	35
Al-Manofia	Qwisna Social Welfare Centre for Boys	Al-Manofia	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Association	75	30
Al-Gharbiyya	Al-Mahallah Al-Kubra Integrated Social Unit for Minors	Al-Gharbiyya	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Unit	150	65
Al-Sharquiyya	Zaquazik Boys' Home	Al-Sharquiyya	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Unit	200	31
Al-Dakahlia	Nabrouh Minors' Protection Institute	Al-Dakahlia	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Unit	150	25
Ismailia	Integrated Welfare Unit for Minors	Ismailia	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Unit	100	27
Port Said	Under-age Girls' Institute	Port Said	Open facility	Girls exposed to delinquency	Port Said Girls' Protection Unit	100	39
Al-Miniya	Al-Miniya Boys' Social Welfare Institute	Al-Miniya	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Association	100	30
Assiout	Assiout Integrated Welfare Unit for Boys	Assiout	Open facility	Boys exposed to delinquency	Social Defence Association	100	17
Souhaj	Minors' Welfare Centre	Souhaj	Open facility	Children exposed to delinquency	Association of Devotees of the Sunna of the Prophet (Souhaj)	30	8
Total						1 455	474

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, General Welfare Department, May 1997.

Table 24

Welfare institutions and units working with minors

No.	Name of institution	Administration or province	Type	Inmates	Overseeing authority	Capacity
1	Al-Margh Penal Institution for Minors	Ministry secretariat	Closed facility	Convicts	State	500
2	Ain-Shams Juvenile Institution	Cairo East	Semi-closed facility	Serious delinquents	State	100
3	Young People's Social Education Institute	Alexandria	Semi-closed facility	Serious delinquents	Alexandria Social Defence Unit	100
Total						700

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, General Welfare Department, May 1997.

Table 25

Numbers of juveniles placed in institutions, classified by reason for placement, 1992-1996

Year	Total No. of children placed	Lacking family	Vagrancy	Prostitution	Begging	Defiance of parental authority	Exposure to delinquency	Minor offence	Homeless	Total No. of types of exposure to delinquency	Other
92	3 302	213	77	69	165	43	55	54	26	702	2 600
93	3 388	225	139	40	154	41	-	-	28	627	2 761
94	3 304	219	110	41	167	32	-	-	34	603	2 701
95	3 929	218	143	52	211	33	-	-	62	719	3 210
96	2 250	37	242	11	-	120	76	25	7	518	1 732

Source: Ministry of Social Affairs, General Welfare Department, May 1997.

203. Social welfare centres and penal institutions offer children vocational training either on the premises or outside, then find them a job and check on them until they are certain that the children are properly re-integrated into society. The same procedure is followed for teaching after completing their schooling, children are monitored in the same way as young people who have completed their training.

Table 26

Number of children placed in institutions, classified by level of education, 1996

Primary	Preparatory	Secondary		Higher	Total
		General	Technical		
233	111	30	89	9	472

(b) Problems confronting juvenile welfare institutions in Egypt

204. The preceding paragraphs offer a complete legal and institutional picture of the criminal justice system for children in Egypt. On paper the system looks exemplary, but that does not mean that it is as good in practice. There are many problems; but far from concealing them, Egypt is striving to tackle them head-on. Specific problems are attributable to two major factors: financial difficulties hampering the operation of the child protection institutions, and the declining educational and cultural level of those whose role it is to deal with juvenile offenders and children in danger.

205. The causes of the financial problems are well-known. Having spent decades in a state of war, Egypt is now trying to generate a new economy, but this entails a difficult transitional period and priorities for the allocation and volume of public expenditure have to be fixed. The State has not always been capable of providing the necessary financing for penal institutions and child protection agencies, with the following consequences:

(i) The rate at which buildings and equipment at such institutions have been renewed and refurbished has not always kept pace with needs;

(ii) Many of these institutions have not been able to acquire up-to-date equipment and facilities which have become essential, such as computers, video and audio-visual equipment for language teaching;

(iii) Some lack auxiliary staff with occupational skills commensurate with the state of advancement in the trades and crafts which the juveniles are being taught.

206. While, moreover, Egypt does have competent professionals dealing with juvenile affairs - judges, deputy public procurators, experts and social workers - other workers in this sector, such as administrative and other personnel, often need training in dealing with minors, an occupation that requires a great deal of sensitivity, a high educational level and considerable humanity.

207. These are matters to which Egypt attaches particular importance. One of the main areas in which the wife of the President, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, takes an interest is the problem of children in difficult circumstances, which she has had placed as a priority item on the agenda of the Technical Advisory Committee. As a result of this initiative, the president of the Council of Ministers, who is also president of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, has held a number of meetings devoted to the problem and paid visits to the least well-endowed establishments. A committee of high-level representatives of the districts concerned has been set up to promote these institutions and bring them up to scratch in the short term. The main objective is to boost the capacity of the non-governmental organizations working in this area, and to collaborate in international cooperation programmes that seek to promote such institutions and provide them with the financial support they need. Consideration is also being given to the establishment of a non-judicial system for dealing with juvenile delinquency in cases where this might be appropriate.

C. Exploited children: physical and psychological rehabilitation and reintegration into society

1. Economic exploitation of children, including child labour (art. 32)

(a) Child employment: general

208. Egypt has for a very long time been a farming country, and agriculture represents its principal source of output. In the past, the unit of production in the country was synonymous with the family, and everyone in the family worked on the farm. The result was a deeply entrenched social value: in the countryside, every head of household necessarily employed his children on work in the fields.

209. The rebirth of Egypt, which began in the early nineteenth century, weakened this social value and led to its replacement by another, namely the need and importance of educating children, which is today very clearly preponderant although the old value is still current in economically poor rural areas and among those who regard child labour, not children's education, as the best way to improve their economic circumstances.

210. Poorly-off families in urban areas must very often cope with extremely harsh economic conditions, and are thus led to put the children to work in order to meet their vital needs. Some children, moreover, are constrained to work for a variety of social reasons: no head of household, a broken family, or the need to take responsibility for one or more families, etc.

211. The employment of children in Egypt is thus a function of the economic and social conditions that the poor strata of the population must cope with in both rural and urban areas. As economic growth and social development advance in Egypt child employment declines, and children can then lead normal lives, going to school and enjoying a happy childhood. The table below illustrates the constant decline in the percentage of working children, which fell from 11.8 per cent in 1960 to 3.7 per cent in 1993 (as a proportion of the total workforce in Egypt).

Table 27

Changes in employment of children between 6 and 15 years of age
(thousands)

Year	Total workforce in employment	Number of children working			Children at work as percentage of active workforce
		Boys	Girls	Total	
1960	7 645	683	222	905	11.8
1976	10 106	884	102	986	9.8
1986	11 919	474	59	533	4.5
1992	14 856	310	111	421	2.8
1993	15 047	340	72	412	2.7

Sources: Central Office for General Mobilization and Statistics, 1960, 1976 and 1986 censuses; 1992 general employment survey (February 1994); 1993 employment sample survey (August 1994).

212. Egyptian legislation enshrines the right of the child to protection, as laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and defines the broad thrust of social policy in Egypt, the most salient point of which was the proclamation by the President of the Egyptian Decade of the Child (1989-1999) to ensure respect for this right. The initiative was crowned by the promulgation of Act No. 12 of 1996 introducing the Children's Code, which marked a decisive step forward in children's welfare, making provision, in chapter 5, section I, for the protection of working children as mentioned above in chapters II and III of this report.

(b) The problem of child labour

(i) Role of the Ministry of Labour and Employment

213. The Ministry of Labour and employment, as the government department responsible for the entire working population, deals with the problem of child labour with the support of labour inspectors and industrial safety and hygiene inspectors. The problem of child labour in Egypt has been the subject both of direct measures seeking to remedy it and of indirect measures designed to combat the causes. The Ministry has called upon the International Labour Organization and on UNICEF for assistance in putting an end to it. In the course of Egypt's cooperation with the International Programme for the Abolition of Child Labour, two workshops for labour inspectors and industrial safety and hygiene inspectors, in fields including agriculture, were held in 1994 under the auspices of the International Labour Office. Pursuant to the recommendations that came out of those two meetings, a child labour unit has been set up to marshal and bring together efforts by governmental and non-governmental agencies and by organizations concerned with child labour. The Ministry has also begun to modernize its database on child labour, linking the basic data at its disposal with those in the various employment services, bringing together information on the subject and ensuring that it is distributed to all the various bodies concerned.

214. The Tripartite Steering Committee (Government, employers and workers) and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, together with various specialist international and regional bodies and community associations, are continuing their efforts in this area. The Tripartite Committee meets every month under the chairmanship of the Minister for Labour and Employment to monitor progress in the campaign against child labour in Egypt and suggest such alterations as it deems appropriate.

(ii) Role of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

215. Being responsible for studying and putting forward policy on child-related matters, the National Council studies the situation of working children and the conditions in which they live and makes appropriate recommendations. It works in coordination with the various executive bodies to put forward specific solutions for bringing child labour and exploitation rapidly to an end. The Council also draws on the experience of community associations. The ministries concerned, together with study centres and research institutions, set up a committee in July 1997 to draw up policies for addressing the problem and to report to the Council's advisory committee.

(iii) The campaign against child labour

216. In the short term, the aim of the campaign is to improve children's working conditions, improve living conditions for them and their families by making sure that services are available to all family members, and to promote the rights of working children. To that end, research works and studies dealing with the problems faced by working children have been brought together. These problems have been defined as follows:

(a) Failure to meet the children's basic needs for things such as culture, leisure, food, clothing and play. To a large extent this is linked with their families' lack of resources and, hence, their inability to play their part in the children's social and mental development;

(b) Lack of opportunities for education, hampering the development of the children's abilities and increasing illiteracy rates among low-income groups;

(c) The risks of accidents at work due to the fact that children must carry and move heavy objects, work at stoves and furnaces or use electrical equipment, plus the risks of chest, skin and eye disease, etc.;

(d) Risks of ill-treatment, violence and bodily or psychological injury at the hands of their employers.

217. The long-term objective is to abolish child labour. Two elements making for child labour have been identified: economic factors and dropping out of school.

218. The economic factors are of two orders, external and internal. The external factors derive from international agreements encouraging the production of cheap items, which presupposes a reduction in the costs of factors of production including salaries - which is why poorly-paid children are employed. The internal factors are both social and family-based: social in that some manual occupations require no professional experience, family-based in that, when the head of the household is unemployed or absent, children are forced onto the labour market, particularly children from large, low-income families.

219. Some children drop out of school because their families, themselves poorly educated, do not grasp the importance of a schooling which in their estimation does not answer to their most pressing needs. Then there are the children who are required to repeat years or fail at school, in particular children who are unable to keep up with the lessons given in class and whose parents do not have the means to pay for private tuition.

(iv) National plan of campaign against child labour

220. The Ministry of Labour and Employment, in collaboration with all the services responsible, has drawn up a plan of campaign against child labour. Introduced at a working meeting in 1995 and approved thereafter, this plan covers programmes designed to ensure that children receive health services as well as educational, cultural, social and leisure facilities, the opportunity to receive a vocational training and after-school instruction. It also seeks to arrange income-generating activities for their families, to train the officials responsible for carrying out

programmes within governmental and non-governmental agencies, and to encourage active participation by employers' and workers' organizations so that they can make a positive contribution to the protection of working children. Besides this, the plan calls for the implementation of a variety of programmes of action to increase the capacity of labour inspectors and occupational safety and health inspectors so that the problem of child labour can be tackled afresh.

221 The short-term objectives are the following:

(a) With assistance from ILO experts, to alert officials in governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to the problem and train them in the methods and arrangements used to plan and carry out action and intervention programmes for the benefit of working children so as to make them more effective;

(b) With support from experts in the ILO Labour Administration Branch, to set up programmes to boost the skills of labour inspectors and industrialists in coping with the problem of child labour and develop their abilities to do so;

(c) To conduct two studies on textile factories and tanneries in the Chibra al-Khayma district before launching intervention programmes there, the aim being to evaluate and strengthen their occupational training capacity;

(d) To conduct a sample survey in the field on dangerous occupations in which children are employed, notably the glass works in Chibra and the tanneries in old Cairo;

(e) To improve health conditions for working children and their families, arranging for periodic health check-ups under a medical programme operating under Ministry of Health auspices, and the services of an occupational safety and health inspector from the Ministry of Labour and Employment;

(f) To improve conditions for children in farming regions, by setting guidelines for the trade unionists responsible for children and stirring up public opinion in rural areas; by notifying trade unionists and distributing information about activities to benefit working children; and by providing educational and health services for working children in rural areas thanks to the development of the health centres that already exist there;

(g) To carry out programmes in favour of working children in the textile factories of Chibra al-Khayma, the glass works in Chibra, the tanneries in old Cairo and the workshops in the town of Al-Harfiyine, so as to give the children health, educational and social services;

(h) To provide occupational training and extracurricular schooling for working and street children in Rawd al-Farag, in cooperation with the Union of Young Workers;

(i) To have ILO agreements and publications translated and distributed, and provide information on practices in the States taking part in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

222. In the medium term, the objectives of the national plan are to alert Egyptian public opinion to the problem of child labour through the radio, television and the press, explaining the consequences and attendant psychological, health and physical dangers, and to mount a thorough nationwide study on child labour in Egypt, emphasizing the situation of girls.

223. The long-term objective is, of course, the abolition of child labour.

(c) Protection of working mothers

224. In keeping with the position that protection of the child should commence in pregnancy, working mothers are afforded protection with a view to ensuring that they can give birth under optimum health and psychological conditions. For the first three months after giving birth, mothers are entitled to time off work on full pay. Later on they can take leave and feeding rests during working hours. Working mothers also benefit from guarantees requiring employers to put nurseries and childcare facilities at their disposal.

225. It should be noted here that these rights do not derive from the 1996 Children's Code alone but have been in existence since the passage in 1953 of the Individual Labour Contracts Act, followed by various pieces of legislation including the labour laws and the Acts on State and public-sector employees. The Children's Code merely rounded out and augmented the collection of rights already laid down in earlier laws. There is thus a legal legacy of instances in which the provisions and principles laid down in those laws have been applied, to back up the provisions of the Children's Code, the Code itself, while resting on the same foundations and drawing on the same principles, goes further. The Code states:

(i) Women working in the public, business or private sectors are entitled to three months' maternity leave on full pay after giving birth; they may not exercise this benefit more than three times during their working lives (art. 70);

(ii) Women in paid employment who nurse their children over the two years following their birth are entitled, for that purpose, to two additional breaks of at least half an hour. Those breaks, which may be taken together, are counted as working hours and must not entail any reduction in pay (art. 71);

(iii) Women employed in the public sector are entitled to take two years' unpaid leave to look after their children;

(iv) In the private sector, women working in establishments employing 50 or more people are entitled to take a maximum of two years' unpaid maternity leave to look after their children;

(v) In accordance with the Children's Code, the provisions of the Social Insurance Code notwithstanding, the employer must pay the social security contributions due from him and from the female employee, or pay the female employee a benefit equivalent to 25 per cent of her wages at the beginning of her maternity leave, at her option;

(vi) Any venture employing 100 or more people is required to install or arrange for nursery facilities to take care of its female employees' children, subject to the conditions laid down in the Children's Code implementing regulations. Ventures situated in the same district and employing fewer than 100 people each must associate for the purposes of meeting the above obligation, subject to the conditions laid down in the implementing regulations;

(vii) Any violation of these provisions is punishable by a fine of between LE 100 and LE 500 for each female employee who has suffered by the violation. In the event of a repeat offence, the fine is increased by the same amount and becomes mandatory.

2. Drug abuse (art. 33)

226. The Narcotics Act, No. 182 of 1960, as amended by Act No. 122 of 1989 following Egypt's accession to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Vienna, 1988), states that anyone handling, producing, possessing, buying, selling, delivering, transporting or offering narcotics for consumption is liable to a fine of between LE 100,000 and LE 500,000 or to the death penalty if the culprit associates with any of these offences an individual aged under 21, an ascendant, descendant or spouse, or an individual for whose upbringing or care he is responsible or over whom he exercises de facto authority.

227. The Ministry of Social Affairs has been dealing with the matter of drug addiction and alcoholism since the early 1960s. The General Welfare Department is responsible for putting aid programmes for drug addicts and alcoholics into effect. The High Committee against Narcotics Use was established in 1964 and reorganized in 1972. Later came the High Advisory Committee on Social Welfare, which incorporates a committee responsible for helping drug addicts and alcoholics; its investment schedule has enabled a series of projects for them to be undertaken since 1980. Thus Egypt now has 105 social welfare centres scattered around its various governorates. Each is staffed by a team consisting of a doctor, a psychologist, an expert on social affairs, an official in charge of occupational training and a moderator. The centres provide services free of charge. Their objective is:

(a) To make people fully aware of the dangers posed and damage caused by consuming narcotics and alcohol;

(b) To treat addicts, either on the premises or by referring them to specialist institutions;

(c) To get individuals back to work after treatment;

(d) To conduct investigations to ascertain the extent of the phenomenon so that appropriate programmes can be drawn up;

(e) To provide early warning of cases of addiction and drug use, especially at the workplace and in teaching institutions;

(f) To organize meetings and gatherings where workers and students congregate and in public places where people gather, making use of all possible audio-visual resources

As a State party to the various international conventions on narcotics, Egypt meets all its international obligations, striving to prevent and punish trafficking in narcotics of all kinds

3 Sexual exploitation and sexual violence (art 34)

228 The use of children in indecent acts (child prostitution) is, generally speaking, rare in Egypt, thanks to the religious upbringing in a society whose members adhere closely to the rules and teachings of Islamic law

229 The Suppression of Prostitution Act, No 10 of 1961, adopted after Egypt acceded to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, in 1953, renders anyone who engages in prostitution, whatever their age, liable to one to three years' imprisonment The penalty increases to a maximum of five years if the victim is under 21

230 The Children's Code also states that minors are at greater social risk if they have been exposed to delinquency, whether by engaging in prostitution-related activities, debauchery, indecent acts, games of chance or drugs, or by being in the service of others engaging in such activities

231 Under article 268 of Act No 37/58, any kind of sexual assault on a minor is punishable by between three and seven years in prison and by a period of forced labour if the culprit is an ascendant of the victim or responsible for his or her upbringing or care (art 269)

232 The use of children in pornographic acts (for the production, dissemination or use of writings or explicit images or audio-visual material employing children to procure sexual satisfaction) is, according to studies on children and crime statistics, unknown in Egypt

233 In the interests of public morals, however, and to prevent delinquency, article 178 of the Penal Code, as amended by Act No 16 of 1952, provides for a penalty of up to two years in prison for anyone found in possession of any pornographic publication or object, or of the means of producing, displaying or disseminating such publications or objects The article says nothing about age, which is covered by the Agreement for the Suppression of the Circulation of Obscene Publications (Paris, 1910) Act No 430/55, on the censorship of works of art and radio and television programmes, prohibits any production inconsistent with public morals and decency

4 Sale, trafficking and abduction (art 35)

234 The Penal Code lays down penalties for the abduction of children The penalty is increased if the victim is very young or female The sale of and trafficking in children are unknown in Egypt

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